

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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No. 280.

NEW YORK, JUNE 3, 1904.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND KID KING; OR, TRACKING THE ARIZONA "TERROR".

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



Old King Brady had him covered. He would have fired, but at the same instant Bull Buffett reeled and fell across the man he had slain. "Hooray, Governor, we've got 'em all!" cried a voice in the doorway.

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The Bradys and Kid King;

OR,

Tracking the Arizona "Terror."

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY OF MR. TARBOX.

"That must be the Jay-eye-see?"

"Undoubtedly it is, Harry. We have followed the directions which we received at Flagstaff closely."

"If they were correct then that must be the mine."

"A fine location. What a shame that such a property should ever have been deserted."

"Providing it is as rich as claimed."

"There can be very little doubt about that. If it had been anything else you wouldn't catch old Aaron Ackerman investing in it."

"He is said to be a pretty close proposition."

"He is certainly that. In my time he would have been called a mean old miser. A close proposition hardly covers his case."

"Say, Governor, I shouldn't like to have undertaken the contract of the promoter who got him into this deal."

"I don't think there was any promoter in it. As I understand the situation, old Aaron came out to Arizona for his health. He heard of the situation at the Jay-eye-see, and, having carefully investigated, went in for it and drew his friends in. The mine, as a mine, is all right, you bet. Only question is, Can you and I protect it from Kid King?"

"Just so. Well, it is up to us to do it. The price named is a liberal one. It won't pay us at all to fail."

The conversation just recorded took place on a certain November afternoon between an old man and one young enough to have been his grandson.

Mounted on a pair of tough little bronchos, the two had

halted at the divide as you go up Wedgewood gulch, which forms the principal trail through the Bendigo range of mountains, lying between Flagstaff and Black Falls, Arizona.

This, while not by any means the wildest section of the territory, is still wild enough for all practical purposes.

Of late it had become a country shunned by all business men and dead to all enterprise.

This was entirely owing to the repeated ravages of a nefarious badman and the gang which followed him, known as the "Kid King crowd," and a very desperate crowd they were admitted to be.

The old man, as he sat in the saddle looking down into the deep basin, where was located the mine named from the famous racehorse, certainly presented a striking appearance.

He was tall and thin with marked features, helped out by his peculiar dress.

A big, broad-brimmed white hat, much the worse for wear, a blue coat of peculiar cut, a high collar and old-fashioned stock, together with other peculiarities might, all combined, have prompted some to put him down as a back number, whereas, actually he was one of the best known characters in the United States.

Old King Brady, the detective!

What name is, or ever can be, better known.

Of course the well-dressed youth with him was Young King Brady, his partner and pupil.

The world famous detectives were trailing badmen and putting them out of business.

Undeniably they had undertaken a tough contract in Kid King.

Night was now close at hand, and the detectives rode down into the deep basin where they had seen the mine.

Soon they struck the creek, and following its windings, came out at the group of rough frame buildings which they had seen from the top of the divide.

Here was the great ore barn, the three shaft houses, the big boarding-house, and several small shanties, which had been occupied by the married men in the days when the Jay-eye-see was being worked.

All was deserted now, but by no means ruinous.

In fact these buildings, well preserved in the dry climate of Arizona, looked as though their occupants had walked out of them but yesterday, when, as a matter of fact, the mine had been deserted for over two years.

"I'd like to know something of the history of this place, Governor," remarked Harry, looking around.

"I can tell you what was told me by Mr. Ackerman when I visited him at Chicago, but I don't intend to," Old King Brady replied.

"And why not, if you please?"

"Because I would just as soon you would hear it from headquarters. All hands will be here before dark, and Mr. Tarbox should be here now. There's no sense in going over the same ground twice."

"Which means that you will want to hear the story again yourself."

"Exactly. Old Ackerman only retailed it out to me secondhand. Tarbox is the man who knows all about the Jay-eye-see mine."

"All right, Governor; I'm not pressing you to waste your breath on me. But where is this man Tarbox? He was to meet us here, I believe."

Such was the case, and the Bradys, as usual, were on time.

They had come to Arizona by the Santa Fe Pacific and, purchasing bronchos at Flagstaff, had ridden direct to the mine.

Apparently there was no one there to meet them.

They tried the office, to find the door locked.

It was the same at the boarding-house, where, in addition to the tight door, they found the windows all nailed down.

The big ore barn was open and empty, and so were the shaft houses.

Looking down into Shaft No. 1, Old King Brady noticed that there was a new wire rope on the ore tub.

"This shaft has been recently worked by somebody," he remarked, pointing out the fact to Harry.

"What can that mean?"

"It means a clew to this whole situation, to my way of thinking."

"As I don't quite understand the situation, you can hardly expect me to get on to the clew."

"Well, then, it means a motive for Kid King's action in bunting everyone out of this mine who makes an attempt to start it up."

"I see. You think the genial Kid is doing some mining on his own account."

"Looks that way; but come, we must get in somewhere. It might be that the directors failed to show up, and in that case we shall have to make a night of it here; so it is just as well for us to find out where we are going to sleep."

Old King Brady led the way back to the office, which was a detached building standing at the end of the group nearest the mountain trail.

Here the old detective thundered on the door with clenched fist and boot toe.

At first no sound was heard within, but just as Old King Brady began saying something about kicking the door down Harry pulled him back.

"There's someone inside there!" he exclaimed. "Don't you hear?"

Old King Brady paused and listened.

A shuffling sound could be heard inside the office.

In a moment a thick, uncertain voice called out:

"Who is making all that noise out there? What are you trying to do—break in the door?"

"That's what's going to come around if you don't open it," shouted Old King Brady. "We've come all the way from Flagstaff to meet Mr. Tarbox by appointment. We want to come in."

"Wait a minute and I'll open the door," was the reply.

"Who do you suppose it can be?" questioned Harry. "I understood you to say that there was no watchman here."

"Nor is there. I strongly suspect that it is Tarbox himself."

"Afraid of Kid King, perhaps."

"Wait! We will know in a minute."

Various shuffling sounds were heard, and presently the door was opened by a long, gaunt, elderly man in his stocking feet and shirtsleeves.

His face was red and swollen, his eyes bleary, and his gray hair all tumbled up.

It took no expert to discover that the man had just been aroused from a drunken sleep.

He stared at the detectives, clutching the half open door for support.

"Oh!" he said, thickly. "I see. It's the detectives. I thought—no matter. That's not the point. Am I mistaken, or have I the pleasure of welcoming the famous Old King Brady to the Jay-eye-see mine?"

"I am Old King Brady," replied the detective. "I take it you are Mr. Tarbox."

"That's me. J. C. Tarbox, Attorney and Counsellor at Law, Flagstaff, Arizona, the banner country of these United States."

"Right," said Old King Brady, stepping inside. "You are the man we came here to see."

But Mr. Tarbox wasn't in quite such a hurry to let his visitors come in, it seemed.

"Hold on a minute," he said, barring the way. "Things

are in a little disorder here. I'll clear up in a minute. Give me a show."

"Show for what?"

"To clear up. I've been taking a bit of a nap and—really, my dear sir, are you boss here, or am I?"

Evidently Old King Brady considered himself boss.

He laid a heavy hand on Mr. Tarbox and pushed him aside, passing into the office.

Harry, who followed close behind, gave a chuckling laugh.

"Evidently Mr. Tarbox has been enjoying himself here," he remarked.

The office was not so much in confusion.

It was simply a matter of whisky bottles.

They lay scattered all over the floor.

On a big desk in the corner was a case labeled "Old Eagle."

Strewn here, there and everywhere were empty bottles bearing the same mark.

"Humph!" muttered Old King Brady. "No wonder you wanted to hold us back. Here's a pretty state of affairs."

"I really must apologize," muttered the lawyer. "I'll clear right up. Won't—won't you try a little? There's another case in the back room."

"Try nothing," snapped Old King Brady. "I see how the case stands. The liquor was sent up here for the directors' meeting, and you have been holding a meeting all by yourself. What will Mr. Ackerman say when he sees this?"

"Ackerman? He's not due here for a couple of days yet."

"Man, you want to brace up. He's due here to-night."

"Thunder!"

"Have you lost the run of time? How many days have you been here drinking, for heaven's sake?"

"No matter," growled the lawyer.

He stooped down to pick up a couple of his empty bottles and measured his length on the floor.

"Let them stay where they are," said Old King Brady. "Leave him alone, Harry. It is just as well that Ackerman should know what sort of an agent he has engaged to manage this business."

"You'll pay for this insult," snarled Tarbox, staggering to his feet. "I don't allow no Wall Street detectives to bulldoze and ballyrag me."

He staggered off into the room behind the office.

Looking through the open door, Harry saw him uncork a bottle, pour out a large tumbler brimming full of whisky, and toss it down.

"He's loading up again, Governor," he remarked, turning back.

"Let him be," said Old King Brady. "What we want to do is to get ready for the directors' meeting. There should be a full supply of provisions here. We have to open up the boarding-house, build a fire, and patch up a dinner, so as to be ready for them when they come."

Old King Brady waited a moment, expecting that Lawyer Tarbox would step back into the office, but he did not.

"Mr. Tarbox, have you got the key of the boarding-house?" he called.

There was no answer.

"Mr. Tarbox!" cried Harry, stepping to the door.

The room was empty.

A door leading into the yard beyond stood wide open.

"Why, he's gone, Governor!" Harry exclaimed.

"The man is crazy drunk!" snapped Old King Brady, hurrying through into the other room.

Here he found a rear door leading out into the mine yard standing wide open.

"This fellow will spoil the pie, surest thing!" cried Harry. "He knows what he is doing, all right. He is up to some trick."

At the same instant a rifle shot rang out in the mine yard.

"Blest if I don't believe he has committed suicide!" cried Old King Brady, making a rush for the door.

A second shot made itself heard before he reached the open.

When he did he found the yard deserted.

No trace of Mr. Tarbox could be seen.

But while the detectives stood there looking around a shot was heard faintly far up the rocky slope behind the Jay-eye-see mine.

Was it the echo?

"Tarbox! Mr. Tarbox!" shouted Old King Brady.

This time there was no echo.

"Those shots were intended as a signal," declared Old King Brady. "That drunken scoundrel has sold us all out to Kid King."

Be this as it might, there was nothing to be found of Mr. Tarbox.

The Bradys searched the mine yard in vain.

CHAPTER II.

MR. TARBOX STEALS A MARCH ON THE BRADYS.

"Done, Governor?" demanded Harry, after they had gone over the ground several times.

"Give it up! He has taken himself off by some secret way," Old King Brady replied.

"Strange that the new directors of the Jay-eye-see should take up with such a man."

"Nothing strange about it, seeing that he has the mine in charge, and has had ever since the English syndicate which owned it quit and offered it for sale."

"Oh, if that's the case it puts a different light on the affair."

"Put the horses in the barn, Harry, and help with the supper business. The directors are due to arrive any time

now. Tarbox or no Tarbox, I want to be ready for them, as I agreed."

Old King Brady now forced open the door of the boarding-house.

Here he found a few cases of canned goods, but that was all in the way of eatables.

"The grand dinner arranged for isn't likely to come off," he grimly remarked, when Harry returned.

"Who wrote you about the grand dinner?" Young King Brady asked.

"Well, it was Tarbox himself. Most of my correspondence has been with him. All we can do is to build a good fire and warm up this place a bit. I fancy one night of it here will be enough for the directors. They will be putting it back to Flagstaff as soon as daylight comes."

The fire was built, and the Bradys sat down to smoke.

"Now is a good time to post me on this business, Governor," Harry remarked.

Old King Brady has a peculiar fashion of keeping the details of his new cases secret, even from his partner, until the time of action comes.

It is true that Harry had been south on other business at the time his partner arranged this Kid King business; still, the Bradys met at Denver, and had journey to Arizona together from that point, yet never a word had Old King Brady to say about the case.

But now the old detective was ready to talk.

"The story of this mine is the story of fifty others, Harry," he began.

"It was started by two practical miners who knew that, while they had not struck a lead which was going to make millionaires out of them in a minute, they had still found a downright good fissure vein with staying qualities which, under proper management, could be worked as a paying investment for a hundred years to come. These two chaps blew in all the money they could beg, borrow or steal, and then fell into the hands of a lot of California street sharks out in Frisco, who bought them out on time notes, sold to an English syndicate for half a million profit and skipped.

"For five years the syndicate tried to run the property, but Kid King ran them off in the end.

"Three superintendents were killed; every other load of the ore started for Flagstaff was nipped in the road and sold to speculators, who shipped it to crooked mills to be worked up. Then, when that couldn't scare them off, the men were worked up to strike, and things were made so hot and expensive for the management that at last they gave it up as a bad job. Of course I can't positively say that the Kid King crowd have been tapping the mine on the quiet ever since, but it certainly looks that way."

"And now who are the owners besides old Aaron Ackerman?" asked Harry.

"There are only two others," replied the detective. "J. T. Wells, of Chicago, and Hiram Hixon, of St. Louis. They are hard-headed fellows, all of them. Ackerman insisted that we should take hold and round up Kid King

before the work began. Tarbox, who represented the syndicate, assured him that this was not necessary, and that Kid King was probably dead, for he had not been seen or heard of in months. I warned Ackerman that the shyster was probably standing in with the Kid and would do all in his power to prevent the mine from being opened up. He wasn't altogether inclined to believe me, though. Well, we will see what he thinks now."

"Know anything about this particular part of Arizona, Governor?"

"No; it is all new ground for me. My work in Arizona has been principally close to the south end, and west of this. Well, we shall have a chance now to pick up a little information, if nothing else, and—hold on! I think they are coming now!"

Someone was certainly coming.

The clatter of hoofs could be heard outside.

The Bradys seized the rifles they had brought with them, and now had them ready at hand.

Under the circumstances, it was not safe to remain unprepared for a moment, for there was no telling but what the newcomers might be Kid King and his band.

Before they could reach the door a shot rang out.

"It's the gang, surest thing!" exclaimed Harry, holding back.

"Come on!" cried Old King Brady, pushing out into the open.

It was now almost dark, but there was still light enough to have enabled the detectives to see the approaching riders, if they had been there.

There was no one in sight.

The clatter of hoofs had ceased.

The Bradys stood on the steps of the boarding-house, taking in everything in sight.

"Look!" exclaimed the old detective, after a moment.

"Where—what?" questioned Harry.

"I don't want to point and attract attention. Just cast your eye over those ledges in front of us—the lower ones, I mean."

"Ah! I see! There he goes."

If Harry had not caught sight of the strange figure then he would have missed it altogether, for even as Old King Brady spoke it drew back among the bushes.

It was a man dressed in Mexican style standing on the ledge opposite the boarding-house door, five hundred feet or more up from the level of the mine.

Seen in the uncertain light, and at so great a distance away, it was not altogether easy to make out just what he looked like.

One thing was certain—he was a man away under size—not over five feet high, if that.

He looked like an escaped freak from some dime museum.

His white hat had a brim which threw Old King Brady's tile far in the shade, and the edge was hung with little silver bells, a style often affected by the true greaser.

Harry thought that his clothes must be of black velvet;

he could distinctly see the bright orange-colored sash about his waist.

This queer little manikin, raising a glass to his eyes, seemed to take in the detectives with one quick glance.

Then, dodging behind the rocks, he disappeared.

"Well?" exclaimed Harry.

"That's the man, I guess," Old King Brady replied.

"Kid King?"

"Exactly."

"He has been described to you?"

"Yes; and while you were arranging about the horses at Flagstaff I managed to pick up his photograph at the station news stand, where I found they had it on sale."

"The deuce! They seem to be rather proud of their bad-men out here!"

"That's what they do. Come in and have a look at it."

"But those horsemen?"

"Well? Where are they? They are as silent now as they were noisy a few minutes ago. They will come along when they get ready, I suppose, whoever they may be."

The Bradys returned to their comfortable fire, where the old detective produced his photograph.

"There you are!" he said. "That's the man."

There was no mistaking the picture.

It represented a dwarfish fellow, dressed in the same style as the man they had just seen looking down at them from the ledge.

"Good looking," said Harry.

"A woman might think so. Look at that eye! Study the curves of that mouth. I tell you, Harry, there is no touch of mercy in that boy's black heart."

"How old do you think he is?"

"That picture looks like a man of twenty-one or two. Let us see if there is a date on it. Yes. It was taken two years ago."

"Is he supposed to be a Mexican?"

"No; he is English, they say. Nothing definite appears to be known about his history. He first turned up as a dealer in a Tombstone faro bank, took to the mountains, managed to get a gang around him, and has been doing business ever since."

"Hark! Someone is coming this time, sure!" said Harry.

Again the clatter of hoofs was heard.

This time the sound was nearer.

Once more the Bradys hurried out into the yard.

This time there was no disappointment.

Four mounted men were riding down the steep trail toward the mine.

"It's the directors at last!" exclaimed Old King Brady, "and they have got a rascally halfbreed guide with them, as near as I can see."

"How do you know he's a rascal?" laughed Harry.

"Never knew one that wasn't."

"Shall we go ahead and meet them?"

"What for? This may not be much of a boarding-

house these times, but it is as good a meeting house as any other. We will stop right here."

It was now getting pretty dark around the mine yard.

Still, there was no mistaking the character of the newcomers, for, besides the four horses there was a fifth loaded down with dress suit cases, umbrellas and hampers, which looked as though one of them, at least, might contain champagne and other belongings which could only be the property of rich capitalists such as those who had purchased the control of the Jay-eye-see mine."

"Strange how things have changed of late," muttered Old King Brady. "Twenty years ago an American with brains enough and cash enough to make a million—and I believe all these men to be millionaires many times over—would have been ashamed to travel about English tourist style like that; but now it's all the go."

"If Kid King gets his claws on some of their fancy fixings he may make them look sick," laughed Harry.

"That's what he will. They don't seem to see us. Well, the shadows are rather thick over this way. They are steering straight for the office."

"We had better go and meet them, Governor."

"No; let them come here. They will have to, anyway. By thunder! That fellow has stolen a march on us after all!"

Once more it was Mr. Tarbox, and this was the time he cut in ahead of the Bradys.

As the little party rode up to the office the door was thrown open, and Mr. J. Tarbox, all bows and smiles, dressed as though he had just struck a new tailor willing to trust him, popped out with extended hand.

"Welcome, gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "Right glad to see you! Welcome to the Jay-eye-see!"

CHAPTER III.

ANOTHER MYSTERY AT THE JAY-EYE-SEE.

Naturally the Bradys felt rather flat.

There was Mr. Tarbox assisting the multi-millionaires to dismount and giving orders to the halfbreed, as though he owned the mine.

"Harry, that fellow has cut in ahead of us," remarked the old detective. "Mind, now! Not a word about that whisky business. Our little tale of ten bottles would fall rather flat."

"Yet, how did he get there?"

"He got away. He has had time enough to get back."

"That's so, of course; but the fellow seems to be plumb sober, while half an hour ago he was so full that he couldn't stand."

"Say nothing and saw wood," growled Old King Brady. "I should have taken your advice and gone forward to meet them. I didn't, that's all."

The Bradys pushed on for the office now.

All three of the millionaires had gone inside.

The halfbreed was coming toward them, leading the horses.

"Hello!" he cried, as he passed the Bradys. "You the big detectives from the States. You come out to Arizona to catch Kid King! Ha, ha!"

"All right, Charlie," replied Old King Brady. "You are the new owner of the Jay-eye-see, I suppose."

"Them's the men!" chuckled the halfbreed. "Better get in there. They are waiting for you."

With a growl Old King Brady hurried on.

"I feel like a fool," he whispered. "I can't understand it at all."

"Calm down, Governor," answered Harry. "Or, at least, don't go in there until you have. It don't amount to anything after all."

"It amounts to this much. We are put at a decided disadvantage. Looks as though we had been asleep over there in the boarding-house; don't you see?"

It grew worse as they pushed ahead, instead of better.

When they reached the office they found the door locked.

The place had now been lighted up brilliantly.

They could see Mr. Tarbox through the window shaking hands with the millionaires.

Old King Brady rapped on the door.

The talking ceased.

In a moment a voice called out:

"Who's there?"

"Blast that Tarbox!" muttered Old King Brady.

With as much calmness as he could command he announced his name.

The door was opened without delay, and the detectives, as they entered, stood amazed.

It was certainly the same man who admitted them, but oh, what a change!

He was now well dressed, clean shaved, and as sober as a judge.

There was not a trace of whisky about the fellow, drunk as he had been so short a time before.

"Ah! Mr. Brady, of New York!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Ackerman, here are those detectives. They could not have been far behind you. Strange you did not meet them on the road."

Mr. Ackerman came forward.

"Brady, how de do!" he said, carelessly. "You are on hand, it seems. Let me introduce you to my partners. Mr. Wells, Mr. Brady; and Mr. Hixon. This gentleman is Mr. Tarbox, of Flagstaff, with whom you have probably been in correspondence, according to my directions. You see he has fixed up things pretty snug for us here."

The Bradys shook hands, but their surprise was too great to allow them to appear natural, as they otherwise would have done.

The whole interior of the office had changed since their last visit.

The desk had been moved back against the wall, and a table set for dinner in the middle of the room, with covers

for four, which, of course, left the detectives out in the cold.

If the table had been prepared by a professional caterer it could not have been more correctly arranged with China, glasses, silver, etc.; dishes of fruit were standing on one of the desk, which had been made to do duty as a side-board.

There also were bottles of whisky, a case of champagne, boxes of cigars, etc.

It all looked like preparations for a banquet, and as the detectives were doing the handshaking a young Chinaman in white blouse appeared and began to place butter, bread, celery, pickles, etc., on the table.

It was this last touch which restored Old King Brady to himself, for he saw that he must be up against some deep-laid plot.

It fully accorded with the stories he had heard of Kid King, however.

According to all accounts, this particular badman never did business like anyone else, but operated after a style peculiarly his own.

It was recorded that he was a great practical joker, and took special delight in putting rich mine owners in ridiculous positions before bleeding them of their cash, or, as had happened in more cases than one, depriving them of their lives.

The millionaires now began talking among themselves, entirely ignoring the detectives.

Tarbox flew around like a hen on a hot griddle, arranging things on the table, uncorking bottles and putting champagne on ice, though wherever he got the ice Old King Brady could not guess.

The old detective studied him closely.

So sure was he that the lawyer could not have sobered up in the short time allowed him that he was almost inclined to think this another person; yet he could detect no point of difference between this man and the one who had first received them at the mine.

"Mr. Ackerman must be warned," thought Old King Brady.

He took the millionaire aside and began to explain.

"Mr. Ackerman," he said, "I feel it my duty to warn you that——"

"What? What are you trying to get at?" demanded the millionaire, rudely breaking in upon his speech.

"I was about to tell you——"

"Then why don't you tell it, man? What is it you are trying to get through yourself?"

"If you would allow me to speak——"

"Allow you to speak? Who is hindering you? Why don't you go right ahead and say your say?"

It was too provoking.

The fact that Mr. Ackerman had been liberally patronizing the whisky flask on the journey up from Flagstaff did not excuse him in Old King Brady's eyes.

"My dear sir, if you don't listen to me you will regret it," he said. "In my opinion, you are at the present mo-

ment in the greatest danger. 'This man Tarbox I believe to be a rascal. I have no doubt whatever that he is at the present moment standing in with Kid King, and——'

"Nonsense, nonsense!" broke in the millionaire. "I am surprised at you, Brady."

"But this banquet——"

"Banquet nothing! Merely a little dinner arranged by my orders. What's the matter with you, man?"

"But, Mr. Ackerman, if you knew——"

"I do know. I know all about it. But, look here, I have no time to talk. I am engaged with my friends, Wells and Hixon. You should not have interrupted me unless you had something to say."

And as he said this Mr. Ackerman turned his back on Old King Brady and rejoined his companions.

They were not talking mine, but horse; and the lively discussion of the merits of a certain racer owned by Hixon went right on.

So did the preparations for the dinner.

Soon they were completed.

The Bradys stood aside, hardly knowing what to do.

Their course of action was soon made very plain to them, however.

Lawyer Tarbox stepped briskly up, and said:

"Now, gentlemen, my guests are about to sit down to the table, for the dinner is all ready to be brought in. If you will be good enough to retire to the next room I will send you in a bit by and by."

Harry expected an outburst from Old King Brady in answer to this insolent speech.

None came.

The old detective bestowed upon Mr. Tarbox a withering look, and stepping up to Mr. Ackerman, said:

"This man has requested us to retire. How about it? Is such your wish?"

"Why, my dear fellow, we are about to sit down to dinner," replied the millionaire. "As you can see, there are only places for us four. I daresay Mr. Tarbox will fix you up later on."

"Very good, Mr. Ackerman. We will then retire from the office, and from the case," said Old King Brady, with perfect calmness. "Gentlemen, we bid you good-evening."

Thus saying, the old detective started for the door.

"Why, hold on! What's the matter?" Ackerman blurted out. "You seem to be going off mad. What's the row?"

"No trouble—none at all. Merely that I do not choose to be treated like a servant, nor to allow my partner to be so treated."

Messrs. Wells and Hixon stared.

Tarbox burst out into a coarse laugh.

"Here! Hold on! This won't do! We don't want you give up the case!" cried Ackerman. "Because a man is working for me, it doesn't follow that I have to ask him to my table, I suppose."

"Certainly not. You don't have to ask, and we don't have to come."

"But this is absurd. I propose to pay you well for your work. After dinner we will talk it over."

"We will talk over nothing. Consider the incident closed, Mr. Ackerman. Gentlemen, once more, good-night."

Bowing themselves out, the Bradys immediately left the office.

Ackerman called after them, but Old King Brady did not answer.

With Harry he walked over to the boarding-house and sat down upon the steps.

"Was there ever such insolence!" exclaimed Harry, finding that Old King Brady was not disposed to talk.

"Yes, indeed! The world is full of it. Old Ackerman was originally a butcher in a little Missouri town. His action only shows his low breeding. Nothing else was to be expected of him."

"Do you really intend to throw up the case, Governor? We have come a long way, and have been at considerable expense."

"Throw up nothing. As far as those men are concerned, I am done with them, of course; but the hunt for Kid King still goes on."

"But who will pay?"

"It makes no difference to me if nobody pays. Just the same, there is a reward up for the capture of this badman, offered by the Territory. Whether it could ever be collected or not, I don't know; but we can make a try for it. We will stop where we are for a few minutes. I expect there will be music in the air before long."

"What's become of that halfbreed?"

"Give it up."

"You think it is all a trap?"

"To catch these three millionaires and prevent them from opening up this property. There can't be the least doubt of it. But what can be done to prevent it from being carried out? We can't force Ackerman & Co. to do as we wish."

"Nor have we deserted them, by any means."

"Certainly not. We are right here to do business, if business offers."

"Where do you suppose all those things came from?"

"And the Chinaman! Out of that back room, of course."

"Queer."

"Not at all. Tarbox vanished in that same back room. Secrets there, my boy."

"It never can be the same man."

"That's what puzzles me. He seems to be the same, and yet not the same."

Thus the detectives talked for half an hour or more.

Old King Brady was constantly on the alert.

He expected a raid of the outlaw band.

It did not come.

Lights flashed in the windows of the office. They could see the Chinaman flitting about, waiting on the table.

Everything seemed to be moving along quietly enough. After awhile Tarbox opened the door and whistled.

The halfbreed was there in front of him.

He seemed to rise up from the doorstep. Yet the detectives, with all their close watching, had seen nothing of the man.

Tarbox whispered something to him, and the halfbreed moved off toward the barn.

"Shadows, Governor?" asked Harry.

"No; ours is a waiting game. We will stop right here." Ten minutes passed.

As they sat they could look in through the office window and see most of what was going on.

Now the three millionaires and Mr. Tarbox arose and stood about the table with glasses raised.

It looked as if they were about to pledge each other in a toast.

At the same instant a low, prolonged cry rang out in the darkness.

"What in thunder is that?" cried Harry, springing to his feet and seizing his rifle, which was ready at hand.

"Careful! Careful!" breathed Old King Brady. "It may be only a bait to draw us away from here."

The cry seemed to have come from off to the right of the boarding-house, in the direction of the mining shafts.

Naturally the detectives both looked in that direction.

They could discover nothing, and the cry was not repeated.

In a moment Old King Brady turned to resume his watch on the office.

"As I thought!" he exclaimed. "Look, Harry! Look!"

Old King Brady said "look," but actually there was nothing to see.

The brilliantly lighted office was now quite dark, and the voices which had reached their ears faintly were now hushed.

"The drop has fallen, all right," muttered Old King Brady. "Ackerman & Co. are in the soup now, all right."

"Shall we go over and see what it means?" Harry asked.

"Might as well, I suppose. Hold your rifle ready. We don't want to get caught in the same boat ourselves."

The detectives hurried over to the office and peered through the window.

It was too dark to see anything. Not a sound was to be heard inside.

"It is running a big risk to go in there, Harry," remarked Old King Brady, "yet we must go just the same."

"It is a risk. The place may be full of Kid King's men ready to jump on us."

Old King Brady hesitated, lingering longer listening.

"We have got to do something," he said, at last. "We can't stand here so."

"What is your idea?"

"Oh, you know, of course; some secret opening in that back room."

"Yet we found the door open after Tarbox vanished that time."

"Did the Chink bring in all that stuff from the outside? I think not."

"He might have done so. I couldn't see."

"Nor I, either, for that matter. It is all a mystery. Suppose we get around to the back and see how the case stands now?"

They stole around to the rear of the office, to find the door standing wide open, as it had been before.

"So tempting a bait," said Harry. "Shall we go in?"

"We must. Hold your rifle ready."

Old King Brady produced his electric dark lantern and flashed it inside the room.

"Come on!" he said, springing up the steps.

Harry followed him through the back room and into the office.

The table stood as they had seen it, with the remains of the meal spread out.

Old King Brady struck a match and lighted the big hanging lamp.

In the middle of the table lay a bit of paper, evidently torn from some memorandum book, with a few words scrawled upon it.

"Here is our message," exclaimed Old King Brady.

He picked it up and read as follows:

Old King Brady: You have discovered what sort of fellows you came out to Arizona to help. Take a fool's advice, and now that you have quit, stay quit. Eat your supper. Lie down and take a snooze without fear. At daylight mount your little nags and take yourself off to Flagstaff, en route for Wall Street. Obey these simple commands, and no harm shall come to you. If you do anything else but this, then beware of the vengeance of

KID KING.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BRADYS ENTERTAINED BY KID KING.

For a few moments Old King Brady stood with the letter in his hand, lost in thought.

"Well, what's the word, Governor?" Harry asked.

"I shall obey the orders received here," replied the detective. "This case is going to work around our way after all."

"Don't understand."

"No; but you will later. Sit down. We weren't good enough to eat with Windy City porkpackers, so we will dine all alone by ourselves."

Harry laughed.

He knew Old King Brady's quaint ways of doing business too well to enter any protest against them.

He accordingly sat down and prepared to make a hearty meal.

There was lots left, and the Bradys ate their fill, leav-

ing the drinkables as they found them until the meal was over.

"How about a small bottle, Harry?" the detective then asked. "You know I'm no advocate of champagne, but I don't know as one small, cold pint between us could do us much harm."

"I hardly think so," was the reply. "Shall I attend to the cork?"

"Wish you would."

"Make it a quart, and I'm with you!" a high-pitched voice behind them called out.

Then a man walked in from the back room.

"Ahem!" said Old King Brady, leaning back in his chair and surveying the newcomer. "Mr. Kid King, I believe?"

It was the little man they had seen on the rocks.

He was dressed in the most fanciful greaser costume.

Behind him came four of the ugliest looking halfbreeds Harry had ever laid eyes on.

They were roughly dressed, and each carried a fine Winchester rifle.

Two planted themselves at each door, and stood there, grim and silent guards.

The Bradys made no effort to reach for their rifles. It was too late.

"Glad to see you!" exclaimed the old detective, extending his hand. "Shake, Kid King!"

"Don't know about that," replied the dwarfish fellow. "I'm not shaking hands with men who come out to my country to hunt me to death. I can respect them just the same, though, so I thought as long as you and your partner were going to have a drink I'd join you. Make it a quart, Harry. I'm particularly fond of champagne. Indeed, I could make the whole quart look sick myself."

Thus saying, the Kid gave one spring, landed on the table amid a great rattling of dishes, and cleaning a place for himself, squatted down with his legs under him like a Turk. The little silver bells on his hat jingled merrily with every movement he made.

It was all so sudden that Harry was taken completely aback.

Old King Brady gave him the wink to take it all in good part.

Putting aside the pint bottle, Harry took a quart of extra dry from the cooler—for there were both kinds there—uncorked it and filled glasses all around.

"Don't your friends get some, too?" he asked.

"Not a drop," replied the Kid. "Champagne don't agree with their health. When they drink it's whisky. To-night they are on the water-wagon, and there I propose to have them stay."

"Good!" said Old King Brady. "No drinking in business hours is a safe rule. As for my partner and myself, we are through business at the Jay-eye-see, so we may safely indulge."

He saw that the Kid was eyeing him narrowly, and he knew that he was weighing every word he said.

Old King Brady raised his glass, and Harry did the same.

"Here's to the good health of Kid King, the Arizona Terror!" he cried.

The Kid laughed and drank with them.

It was hard to believe that this strange little fellow was the leader of one of the worst gangs which had ever tormented Central Arizona.

And yet this man was said to be guilty of a dozen murders, and his very name was sufficient to strike terror into the hearts of the inhabitants of any district where his presence became known.

"Now for another!" cried the Kid, handing Harry his glass.

"One is our limit," replied Old King Brady.

"The rest of the bottle is mine," declared the Kid. "When I have put it away I shall be ready for business, and not before."

And this the Kid proceeded to do in short order, turning down glass after glass.

When all was gone he kicked the bottle off the table, pulled out a huge gold watch, looked at the time, and said:

"Now, ten minutes for business, General Brady! What have you to say?"

"After the Honorable Kid King," replied Old King Brady. "Harry, pass the cigars."

They lighted up, but when Harry would have passed the box to the halfbreeds the Kid sat down on that, too.

"No," he said. "They want no cigars. They neither drink nor smoke in business hours. You want to hear from me?"

"I do," said Old King Brady.

"And you shall. You read my letter?"

"Yes; you know that."

"I do, you bet. Every move you have made since you struck this mine has been watched."

"So I supposed."

"If you had attempted to trace out the means by which we deprived you of your friends you would have been instantly shot."

"Ah! I daresay."

"You would have been done up, anyway, as it was, but for one thing."

"Object to giving it a name?"

"Not at all. Such is my intention. It is because you were man enough to throw up your contract with those blasted aristocrats when they insulted you and your partner."

"Oh, I see."

"Jay-eye-see is not going to be a healthy place for you any longer, brother. You want to stick to your resolution and light right out. Hike back to Wall Street in a hurry, if you know what's good for you."

"You spoke of our sleeping here all night."

"I did, and I meant it. You can do so if you wish."

"I would start to-night if I felt sure that these friends of yours would make us no trouble on the road."

"I guarantee that there shall be none."

"Then we shall start at once. You are through with us?"

"I am through with my end of the talk now, Brady. By the way, these cigars of yours are very good."

"They are not mine. They belong to the millionaire's club."

"Oh, aye, yes. Well, and what have you got to say?"

"I don't know that I have any remarks to make. I should, however, like to ask a few questions."

"Ask."

"These three men. What do you intend to do with them?"

The Kid chuckled.

"Hike yourself back to New York, my bold Brady, and trouble not your aged head with things which do not concern thee."

"A Quaker?"

"Who's a Quaker?"

"I asked if you were one."

"Not that. Merely a college man."

"What college?"

"Again your question is personal and don't deserve an answer. Still, I propose to tell you that I am a graduate of an English university of note. I was given my choice of becoming a lawyer, a parson or a pedagogue. I wanted neither on my plate, so I ran away, came to America, and turned——"

"Into the Arizona Terror," said Old King Brady, finishing out the Kid's sentence. "Well, this doing the bad-man act has got to be a regular business."

"Any further questions?"

"I don't think of any more. My main object of curiosity is what is to become of these three men."

"Since you have thrown up your engagement with them their fate cannot possibly concern you. Now are you done?"

"All done."

"Good! Now then, for a little entertainment before we part company, in the earnest hope that we never meet again."

Old King Brady laughed.

"Well, you seem to be a pretty good sort of a fellow," he said. "I wish you were in better business."

"Never you mind my business. It suits me, and is as good as yours any day in the week. But smoke up, gentlemen. The entertainment is now about to begin."

The Kid clapped his hands, and in through the door of that mysterious back room walked five handsome young fellows dressed in full native costume, carrying guitars. They ranged themselves around the table, and at a signal from the Kid began to play and sing.

The song was in Spanish, and the playing splendid.

Another and still another song followed, and then as the

music ceased a beautiful girl dressed in white gauze came bounding into the room.

Her long black hair, which hung loosely down her shoulders, was adorned with flowers, and her white dress was decked out with gaily colored ribbons.

The Mexican boys began playing a fandango, and while the girl passed around speaking to one and another, two of the guards removed all the dishes from the table. Kid King sitting smoking in silence and watching it all.

When the last of the dishes had been removed he sprang up, and extending a hand, helped the girl to spring upon the table.

"Now, then, you Bradys," cried the Kid, "you will have the pleasure of seeing me dance the fandango with Senorita Selena Colara, the prettiest girl and the best dancer in all Arizona. Muchachos! Let her go!"

Then the guitars broke out again, and the dance on the table began, while the Bradys sat there taking it all in.

CHAPTER V.

GETTING READY TO BEGIN AGAIN.

Many a smoker in the realms of New York's fashionable four hundred would have reveled in such fine fancy dancing as that to which the Bradys were treated by Senorita Selena Colara and Kid King.

The dance lasted for half an hour.

Then more champagne was opened.

The Kid and the lady and the boy musicians all had their share; but the grim guards who stood with their rifles ready on either side of the room got not a drop.

After the drinking was done the Kid, who still remained on the table, exclaimed:

"Gentlemen, I hope you have been pleasantly entertained this evening."

"We certainly have," replied Old King Brady, wondering what the end of it all was to be.

He was to know then and there.

"Glad of it," said the Kid. "Will you oblige me by both stepping outside? When you hear the rifle shot you can come in again."

"The request of Kid King is equivalent to a command," replied Old King Brady, rising. "Shall we have the pleasure of seeing you again?"

"That remains to be seen. Obey the command without question, please."

The Bradys immediately left the office, the guitar boys playing "Farewell to Old Friends" as they passed out.

Instantly the door was slammed shut behind them, and all lights were extinguished.

"Curtains down!" muttered Old King Brady. "This ends the evening's entertainment, Harry. I wonder what is coming next?"

They stood quietly waiting

Some little movement could be heard inside, and then all grew quiet.

Suddenly the sharp report of a rifle was heard.

Following close upon it came the cry in Kid King's shrill voice:

"Good-night!"

"Good-night!" answered Old King Brady and Harry, in a breath.

The old detective produced his electric dark lantern then, and entered the office, finding the door unlocked.

Every trace of the entertainment had vanished, even to the table and desk and other office furnishings, and things had been restored to their places as the Bradys had seen them when they first came in.

"All done," said Harry, in a whisper. "Do we examine that wonderful back room?"

"Not on your life," replied Old King Brady. "Don't think of such a thing."

"I should like mighty well to get on to the Kid's curves just the same."

"It would be mere madness to try it. We either want to go to bed in this boarding-house or light out."

"What about our horses?"

"I expect to find them in the barn all right."

"Think you could put in a comfortable night in the boarding-house?"

"I should rather be on the road."

"Then we take to the road."

"Yes," replied Old King Brady, aloud. "Our work is all done here. We had better be getting back to New York as fast as we can."

"After all," added Harry, "it would be an outrage to bother Kid King after the handsome way in which he has used us."

Whether these remarks intended for the ears of the Kid ever reached him or not it is impossible to say.

The Bradys now left the office and proceeded directly to the barn.

Here they found their own horses undisturbed, but those of the three millionaires, with all their belongings, had disappeared.

"It's high time we were going, Harry," declared the old detective. "For once we have met our match. Single-handed and alone we can never stand up against Kid King."

This remark, made aloud just before the detectives rode away, was intended to be overheard, of course.

Mounting, the Bradys dashed off by the Flagstaff trail.

Not until they were well up on the mountainside did they dare to trust themselves to speak aloud of their own affairs. "That fellow takes the bun," remarked Harry then.

"So much for education," replied Old King Brady. "It hasn't been our lot to run up against an educated badman any time before."

"That's right. He's a queer little rooster. But what do you propose to do?"

"Lie quiet for awhile and see how the cat jumps."

"You don't mean to go to Mr. Ackerman's assistance, then?"

"Why should I? I see no reason. I gave up the case. He and his friends were eating and drinking for half an hour or more before the break came. They did not come out after us, or make any effort to get us back. While I don't intend to leave Arizona without making an effort to rescue them, I still intend to let them enjoy the fruits of their folly a few days."

"You don't think there is any danger of the Kid doing them up?"

"Pshaw, Harry! Does a fellow of his sort kill the goose that lays the golden egg? Take my word for it, the Kid isn't that kind."

They rode on, talking the matter over until the subject was pretty well exhausted, and then in silence until along toward morning, when they came into Flagstaff and put up at the Grand Occidental hotel.

No one paid any particular attention to them next morning when the detective appeared at breakfast.

Harry, who had come down to the table a little ahead of his partner, was reading the Flagstaff morning paper when Old King Brady took his seat.

"Great newspaper this, Governor," he said, in a whisper. "I'll be hanged if they haven't made a scoop of that affair."

"You mean the affair at the Jay-eye-see?"

"What else? Not our little entertainment by Kid King, but the millionaire's racket."

"Impossible that they could have heard of it in any way, but one."

"You mean reported by Tarbox?"

"Exactly."

"So I say. Listen to this."

Harry, in a low voice, read as follows:

"Another Dastardly Outrage! Kid King on the Warpath Again! Capture of the New Board of Directors of the Jay-eye-see Mine.

"We learn that the three eastern capitalists who arrived in town yesterday, Messrs. Aaron Ackerman, Jas. T. Wells and Hiram Hixon, the newly elected board of directors of the Jay-eye-see, have gotten themselves in a hotbox of the worst kind, while our esteemed townsman, Mr. J. C. Tarbox, narrowly escaped a similar fate.

"Messrs. Ackerman & Co., after leaving Flagstaff yesterday, rode out to the mine, where they met Mr. Tarbox, who, as is well known, represents the former English owners of the property.

"The intention was, on the part of Mr. Tarbox, to formally deliver the mine to its new owners.

"While the party sat at supper in the office a gang of masked men suddenly came dashing into the yard and surrounded the building.

"They were led by the little Kid, who, as usual, was not masked.

"Kid called for the bloated capitalists to come out and

surrender themselves, when Mr. Tarbox, with his usual hot-headed daring, rushed out of the door and, defying the whole band—it is said that there were upward of one hundred—fired three shots before he was overpowered by masked men who sprang from their horses for the purpose.

"It is not known what effect these shots had, but it is believed that one wounded the Kid himself.

"Meanwhile the directors were trembling with fear inside, not being educated up to our Arizona style of doing business.

"Mr. Tarbox having been temporarily overpowered, Messrs. Ackerman, Wells and Hixon were all captured amid many protests, but without a struggle, and were tied to their horses and driven off into the mountains.

"Mr. Tarbox went with them for a mile or so, when the Kid suddenly announced that he was to be turned loose to carry the news to the friends of the directors, and also to state the demands of the bold Kid in the matter of ransom.

"These are decidedly reasonable, considering the wealth of the parties, we should say, being only \$5,000 a head. As Mr. Tarbox truly remarked to our reporter, this is, of course, the asking price. He feels confident he can compromise on \$12,000.

"Of course we do not feel ourselves just in a position to advise, but if an opinion was asked we should say that the sooner the friends of these gentlemen cashed in the better, for it is about time for one of the Kid's rampages, and once he gets started on the warpath he may take a notion that he wants the multi-millionaires for his private bowling alley.

"If he does he will use them, you can bet, and they won't be of much use to their owners when he gets through.

"Of course this state of affairs is an outrage and a great hindrance to the development of the country, but what are you going to do?"

Harry threw down the paper with a grin of sarcasm on his face.

"How is that for clear, winter-strained, unadulterated cheek?" he exclaimed.

"Graft! Graft!" replied Old King Brady. "The editor must be standing in with Tarbox."

"Can't be any other way. But what is to be done? Queer it doesn't say a word about us."

"Let me see the paper," said Old King Brady, reaching out for it.

"There is nothing more. I looked all through it," Harry declared.

"You did, eh? Well, then, you overlooked this item. And Old King Brady read:

"The two New York detectives, the Bradys, or Gradys, whichever their name is—we really forget—who started for the Jay-eye-see shortly before the arrival of the train which brought in the directors, must have got lost in the shuffle.

"Mr. Tarbox reports that he saw nothing of them at the mine. The probabilities are that they are lying up somewhere for reasons best known to themselves.

"This demonstrates the absurdity of bringing detectives from the East to work against our badmen.

"If we are unable to curb Kid King—and we may as well admit it—how can a couple of Wall Street detectives expect to succeed with such a strenuous proposition? This bringing in of outsiders is absurd. If the Kid catches the O'Gradys he is bound to make short work of them, and teach the Wall Street sharks who have got their clutches on our mines to mind their own business in the future."

"Was there ever such pure, unadulterated gall!" cried Harry, as Old King Brady laid the paper down.

"Pshaw! It is the old story," was the reply. "That kind of business is what is keeping this country back. Let anyone of these fellows strike a good claim, and what does he do? Hurry east as fast as trains will take him; tries his best to dump it on Chicago, New York or Boston capitalists with all speed. Then as soon as he gets their cash he returns to Arizona and does his little part to keep up the hue and cry against Wall Street sharks and to prevent the mine from being properly developed. It is all absurd."

Having thus expressed his sentiments, Old King Brady proceeded to get his breakfast, and by the time he had finished he had fully unfolded his plans.

What was done was as follows:

First, Old King Brady called for their bill, which he promptly paid.

Next he went to the liveryman of whom he had purchased the bronchos and sold them for half what he had paid for them, announcing his intention of returning east via Santa Fe, where he declared he had business which would detain him several days.

Then, buying tickets for that point, the Bradys took the first train and departed.

They fully expected to strike Mr. Tarbox at the station, but he did not put in an appearance.

Arrived at Santa Fe, the detectives remained in town for two days.

The first thing they did was to wire the house of Ackerman & Co. full particulars of the capture of the millionaires, with the suggestion that no ransom be sent to Kid King under a week's time, no matter how urgent his demands might be.

Then the Bradys quickly vanished.

Next day there arrived in Flagstaff two prospectors, who tied up at the cheapest of the railroad hotels.

Dressed in shabby clothes, without baggage, and rather dejected in appearance, these men attracted no attention.

No one ever guessed that old Jack Flood and Tom Tyson were the famous New York detectives "who had sneaked out of town," as the papers put it a couple of days before.

The Bradys found that the excitement over the capture

of the millionaires had all died away and was no longer a subject of conversation.

Such an affair was too common to the long-lived in Flagstaff.

The only mention made of it in the hearing of the detectives was at the supper table that night, when one of the railroad men remarked that he had heard that Ackerman's family had decided to send his ransom to Kid King.

Twice that evening the Bradys saw Mr. Tarbox on the street.

There was no sign of liquor about the man, nor anything to indicate that he ever had drank in his life.

The detectives announced that they intended to go into the mountains next day prospecting, either for gold or for work, as the case might be.

As Old King Brady put it, "If we strike a job we shall take it; if we don't, then mebbe we will strike a mine."

Next morning while hanging around the station the west-bound express came in, and the Bradys saw a well-dressed young woman, accompanied by a young man rigged out in ultra English style, alight.

"Harry, note that pair," said Old King Brady, in a whisper. "Lay up to the hotel and find out how they register, if you can; it is my opinion that girl is old Ackerman's daughter. I am certain she is the same girl who came into his office in Chicago while I was talking business with him two weeks ago."

Harry watched his chance and got it.

His report was that the names signed by the pair on the hotel register were J. Jones-Smythe, New York, and Miss Alice Ackerman, Chicago.

Old King Brady, who had been watching, saw the couple enter the Diamond Block, in which the office of Mr. Tarbox was located.

"Harry," he said, when his partner returned. "here is another complication. These two have come to arrange for old Ackerman's ransom, surest thing."

CHAPTER VI.

P. Q. PUTS A PROPOSITION.

"Nothing can be done about it. It is of no use for us to think of it. If we were to attempt to warn that young woman, and tell her what sort of a man Mr. Tarbox is, it would only get us into trouble and spoil what little chance we may have of success."

These remarks were made by Old King Brady shortly after he caught sight of the pair through the windows of Mr. Tarbox's office.

The lawyer was in close consultation with them.

It happened to be the girl who was doing all the talking.

Mr. J. Jones-Smythe could be seen sitting quietly by with the head of the big cane he carried in his mouth.

"That fellow is a hyphenated jackass," remarked Harry, as the detectives turned away.

The Bradys were now ready for business.

They engaged no horses for this trip, but started on foot for the Bendigo range.

Their intention was to proceed slowly to the Jay-eye-see, making a careful examination of the country on the way.

The distance to the mine was something over thirty miles, and they scarcely expected to cover it before dark.

After passing the big smelting works and the mines of the San Francisco & Arizona Co., which were in full blast, they left the main trail and struck into the mountains.

From that time forward they did not meet a living soul, and for several hours they toiled on through the dark canyon, coming out at last on the divide.

Here they found a ruinous log hut which had been built as a "relay house" by the Jay-eye-see people when they first opened the mine.

These houses are scattered over the little used mining trails in Arizona and other parts of the far West.

The traveler is supposed to cook his own meals and sleep in his own blankets.

Bunks and rude furniture are provided, also wood for cooking purposes.

The rule is for the traveler on arriving to use such wood as he finds, and before leaving to provide as much more for the next man.

Although the afternoon was well spent and night was close at hand, the Bradys had not yet had dinner, the old detective having been anxious to push on as far as possible toward the mine before making the halt.

From this point the Jay-eye-see mine could be seen down in the deep hollow, still some five miles distant by the road.

While Harry was attending to the fire Old King Brady took a long, searching look through the powerful field glass which he always carries.

He was still thus engaged when Harry came out of the hut and announced that the coffee was in process of being made.

"We will have some grub ready in a moment, Governor," he remarked. "In the meantime what do you see down there?"

"Nothing at all of the least interest. I was in hopes that we might see some one moving about, but no one has showed up yet."

"Your theory that Kid King is working the mine don't seem to hold good then."

"He is not working to-day, certainly; but what he may do to-night is another part of speech. Have you searched the hut thoroughly, by the way?"

"All but the loft. I haven't been up there. There is a trap door, but no ladder, and I didn't take the trouble to climb up."

"It is not likely that there is anyone there; still, we had better make the search before we do much talking."

"How long do you intend to stay here?"

"Until dusk. We will then slip down to the mine and put in the night on the watch."

"Come in and get a cup of coffee and a sandwich. Then I'll search the loft."

The Bradys partook of their refreshment in silence.

They had scarcely finished when the wisdom of the old detective's advice was made apparent.

Somebody sneezed.

The sneeze, which was a loud one, came from the loft.

"By jove, you were right! There is somebody up there!" breathed Harry.

"Wait! No climbing up now!" whispered Old King Brady. "Do you want to get shot? Mind your eye. It won't do to even breathe."

The detectives remained absolutely motionless, listening.

Somebody in the loft gave a loud yawn, and then a shuffling of feet was heard.

"Just woke up," breathed Old King Brady. "He does not suspect that we are here."

This was evidently the case.

The person in the loft could now be heard walking about.

Listening attentively, the detectives could hear him muttering to himself, although they were unable to distinguish words.

Then came a great clatter, and a ladder was let down.

They could just catch sight of the fellow and no more, but from his awkward movements they came to the conclusion that he was half drunk.

In a moment he was backing down the ladder, with the rifles of the two detectives covering him.

Not until he reached the floor and turned did he discover the fix he was in.

"Gee!"

The man fell back against the wall and involuntarily threw up his hands.

"Keep there, neighbor!" cried the old detective. "Don't you move unless you want to be bored as full of holes as a patent sieve. Your name is Tarbox, I believe."

Perhaps it was, and perhaps it wasn't, Harry thought.

The man certainly was the living image of Mr. J. C. Tarbox, the lawyer and liar of Flagstaff.

But only that morning they had left Mr. Tarbox seated in his office talking to Mr. J. Jones-Smythe and Miss Alice Ackerman.

They had come straight ahead and passed nobody on the road, so how could the lawyer be with them here in the relay house, dressed in a suit of clothes which suggested that he might have been sleeping in them for a week, and very drunk most of the time, at that?

Altogether it was a mystery; but then Mr. Tarbox was a man who had played a mysterious part from the first.

He stood there winking and blinking, having all he could do to keep his hands up as he mumbled:

"Say, you've got the drop on me, stranger; but don't you shoot, if you know on which side your bread is buttered. Mind what I'm telling you now."

"You can put down your hands," said Old King Brady, "only mind how you make a move toward your hip pocket—hear what I say?"

"I hear," replied the man, dropping his hands.

"You haven't answered me yet."

"What was it you asked? I've been drinking kinder heavy of late, and my head is all mixed up."

"You look it. I asked you your name."

"Well, I reckon it's Tarbox."

"J. C.?"

"Not on your life. That's my brother. I'm P. Q."

"I see. Twins?"

"So I always understood."

"It is just as well you are P. Q. and not J. C.," said Old King Brady, lowering his rifle, "because he's a man I've sworn to shoot on sight. I see now there is a difference between you. I've got nothing against you, P. Q."

"Then if you've nothing against me, perhaps you have something for me. If you have a drop of whisky about you, give it to me, for heaven's sake."

"That's what I haven't got; neither whisky nor money, nor anything else except my rifle, a little coffee, and the clothes I stand in. Try a sup of the coffee. It will do you good."

"How about your partner?" demanded P. Q., fixing a bleary, eager eye upon Harry.

"I'm in the same fix," was the reply.

"I'll take the coffee, then," mumbled P. Q. "You might give me one of them sandwiches. If I can't get no more whisky I s'pose I'll have to sober up. So I may as well eat. That's something I never do when I'm on a tear."

"The more fool you are, then," replied Old King Brady. "Tom, pass the coffee pot."

P. Q. drank until they thought he would never stop.

"You haven't had any whisky in a good many hours now," Old King Brady remarked.

"No: it's near two days."

"That will do you good. You must have been hoisting pretty heavy to show up as you do now, being two days off your drink."

"I have," was the reply. "It's the worst tear I was ever on."

"Why don't you cut it out altogether?"

"And do the respectable, like J. C.?" demanded P. Q., with a horrible leer.

"Your brother is a slick proposition, P. Q."

"He's the biggest scoundrel on earth, old man."

"Amen to that."

"What's your name?"

"Jack Flood."

"And your partner?"

"Is Tom Tyson."

"What's your grudge against my brother?"

"I owned a claim over Prescott way a few years ago. It was a good one, and he did me out of it through his law tricks."

"He's able. He's put me on the bum and made me what I am. Are you gunning for J. C.?"

"Decidedly gunning."

"I could stand in to help you, if I chose."

"I'm open to any proposition."

"What's your lay now?"

"Haven't any special. Like you, I'm on the bum. Picked up with Tom here a couple of weeks ago. We've been tramping around looking for work in some mine ever since. Heard the old Jay-eye-see was going to start up, so I thought we'd come around and see if we could not get a show."

"Is that right?"

"I have no motive for giving you anything that isn't right, friend. I am an old, used-up man. When I first saw you standing there at the foot of the ladder I thought the hour of my revenge on J. C. Tarbox had come, and I was prepared to take it. Now I haven't got any plans."

P. Q. took another cup of coffee and looked long and hard at the old detective.

The false white beard completely deceived him, however.

The Bradys' disguise was excellent. A clearer-headed man than P. Q. Tarbox could have been deceived.

As for Old King Brady, he felt that he was started on the right road at last.

He realized that he had to deal with a miserable wreck who hated everybody.

Moreover, this man must know all Kid King's secrets.

"If I am going to track the Arizona Terror to a point where I can put him finally out of business, what better ally can I have than this fellow?" Old King Brady asked himself.

"Boss, what are you driving at?" he added, aloud.

"I'm thinking," replied P. Q.

"So I see; but of what?"

"Whether you and your partner would like to make a big strike?"

"You just try us!" laughed the detective. "I'm equal to anything to get my paws on a little cash."

"You look it."

"My looks don't lie! Put your proposition, P. Q."

"I'll do it. Say, how would you like to join me in a scheme to down Kid King?"

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER DEALINGS WITH P. Q.

It had come just as Old King Brady expected.

But the old detective was not coming off his perch too easy.

"Don't know about that," he said, carelessly. "I've heard of several fellows who tackled Kid King. All of them are pushing clouds now."

"He's a dangerous proposition for one who don't know the ropes, Flood," replied P. Q., quickly; "but, as it happens, I do."

"So?"

"Yes."

"How's that?"

"Swear you will never betray me, even if you don't care to stand in with me on the deal."

"I swear!" replied Old King Brady, holding up his hand.

"And you, too, young feller."

"Oh, I swear, too," replied Harry. "You needn't be afraid to trust us. We are both as close to hard pan as you are."

"Not quite; I'm most dead. But that's the drink."

"We might be in the same boat at the present moment if we had the price," said Old King Brady. "Go on with what you have to say."

"Have you been around these parts long?"

"No; we came to Flagstaff only yesterday. We've been working down Santa Fe way."

"Then most likely you haven't heard what happened at the Jay-eye-see mine the other night."

"You mean about Kid King's crowd sweeping down on those millionaire directors?"

"Yes."

"We heard it talked about in the boarding-house where we tied up last night. Some say they have escaped."

"Escaped nothing. The Kid has them still. But there wasn't any swooping down business about it. That was just another of J. C.'s lies that he got published in the paper. They were captured in altogether a different way."

"Tell us about it."

"Not unless you agree to stand in with me."

"I agree; how about you, Tom?"

"Count me in," said Harry. "I'm not going to desert, I guess."

"Settled! Now, P. Q.!" added Old King Brady.

"Hark!" exclaimed the man, springing up from the old chair in which he had been seated during this conversation. "Someone is coming up the road."

The Bradys were on their feet, too.

The sound of horses approaching could be distinctly heard.

"They are coming on the Flagstaff trail, all right," said Old King Brady. "I think the best thing we can do is to get out of sight somewhere, provided we mean business in this talk of ours."

"I do," replied P. Q. "You're dead right, too. Slide behind the house, boys. Let's watch 'em go by if they are going by, or be ready to give 'em a warm reception if they intend stopping here."

"Right," said Old King Brady.

They left the relay house and concealed themselves among the big rocks which lay scattered about the rear.

"Would you go in for a hold-up, P. Q.?" Harry asked.

"Huh!" growled Tarbox, the drunkard. "Would a dog snap at a beefsteak? It would have to be all on your side, though. I'm cleaned out."

"Then you haven't got a gun?"

"Nary a gun. Had both rifle and revolver; but they were taken away from me when I began this drunk."

"Who by?"

"Oh, a fellow named Bull Buffett. What does it matter? It was done by the orders of the Kid."

"Hello! Then you actually belong to Kid King's band?" Old King Brady asked.

"Of course I do. I thought you understood that. Hold up the talk now. They are right here, whoever they are, and as they can't be going anywhere but to the Jay-eye-see, I rather think we had better let them go on."

"Why so? If there is graft to be had, why not get it?"

"Because the Kid may be expecting them. If he is, then you may be blamed sure he will have someone out reaching for them who might run across us by accident. There wouldn't be anything very pleasant about that."

"Sounds right," said Old King Brady; "but here they are! By gracious! It's your brother! It's J. C.!"

Old King Brady threw up his rifle as he spoke.

A party of three riders were just coming up to the top of the divide.

J. C. Tarbox, looking as sleek and well-fed as ever, was in the lead.

Behind him rode Miss Alice Ackerman, while J. Jones-Smythe, the dude, brought up the rear.

"Now is my time to do that man!" hissed Old King Brady. "I'm going to shoot!"

Now was the time to prove P. Q.'s sincerity, and the old detective had no other purpose in his remark.

"Don't shoot!" whispered the drunkard, laying his hand on Old King Brady's arm.

"Why not? Do you try to stop me? I thought you said you hated your brother? I have him covered. Now is the time, man."

"No! We will catch him at the Jay-eye-see! Drop that rifle, or the first thing you know you will be dropped yourself."

"By you?"

"By one of Kid King's spies. Don't be a fool."

Old King Brady lowered the rifle.

He was as much in the dark as ever about P. Q.'s motives.

The only thing he had learned was that the resemblance between the Tarbox brothers was marvelous.

If they had been dressed alike it would have been impossible to tell the difference between them.

"At least," thought Old King Brady, "something of the mystery of the Jay-eye-see is explained."

Meanwhile the party had come up opposite the relay house, where J. C. Tarbox reined in.

"We can stop here and rest if you wish, Miss Ackerman," he said. "That is what this hut is intended for. It is the relay house; a hotel at which everyone is expected to be his own landlord. Not exactly the Auditorium, in Chicago! Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Auditorium would be as much out of place here in this mountain region as that would be on Clark street,"

replied the girl, in a sweet voice. "If you think it is necessary for us to stop here, Mr. Tarbox, why let us do so; but if not, I would greatly prefer going straight on."

"Oh, it is not necessary. A short ride further will bring us to the mine."

"I am so anxious about my poor father. Do you think there is any danger that our plan may fail?"

"Really, I can't say, miss. I have told you all I know. Money is what Kid King is after, and as you have the money for your father's ransom with you, I really don't see why our plan should fail, always providing we can get at Kid King."

"By jove! Suppose he was to have a go at us before we had time to make him understand what we wanted?" drawled Mr. J. Jones-Smythe.

"You're afraid—that's what's the matter with you!" cried Miss Ackerman.

"By jove, you are hard on a fellah, Alice. Who would not be afraid. Do you suppose I want to run up against this Kid—Kid King?"

"Don't double him up. One Kid King is quite enough to deal with. I only wish I had him here now at the other end of my revolver. I'd make him sick."

"Aw, by jove, Alice, how fierce you talk. One would think you were some cowboy—aw, by jove, I don't mean that—I mean a cow girl, doncherknow!" drawled the dude.

"You're a fool, and every time you open your mouth you make the fact plainer," retorted Alice.

It was the last the Bradys heard.

The little party had moved on again, and they passed out of hearing now.

While listening to their talk Old King Brady had also been watching P. Q.'s face closely.

He had read the answer to his question there.

"This man only prevented me from killing his brother in order to give him a chance to get his revenge in his own way," he thought.

He therefore remained silent until P. Q. was ready to talk.

Not a word did the drunkard speak until he was sure his brother was out of hearing.

He then came out from behind the rocks with a smile of intense satisfaction on his face.

"We've got 'em!" he cried. "Flood, we've got the big end of the stick in both hands. Follow me."

He led the way back among the rocks, avoiding the trail.

"Mind explaining?" asked Old King Brady.

"Can't," was the reply. "It would take too long. What we want to do is to head them off at the mine."

"How can we do that when we are going away from the trail?"

"Leave that to me, will you? Maybe you don't know that I used to be superintendent of the Jay-eye-see."

"So?"

"Yes; I was the first."

"Then naturally you ought to know a lot about it."

"There isn't anyone who knows any more. Perhaps you know the place, too."

"No, no! How should I?"

"Let me tell you something. The Jay-eye-see is a dry mine."

"Dried up?"

"Not on your life. It's as rich a mine as there is in Arizona, but it has no water in the shafts."

"Yes, yes! How is that?"

"Why, it all seems to run off in an underground channel; consequence was that when we started the first shaft we found how the cat jumped, and had to build a sluice to let water enough down from the mountain to wash the ore and use it for other purposes. Later we struck water in Shaft No. 3, and a pump was put in. That's the time we abandoned the sluice. Right after that we built the office, and where do you suppose we run it up?"

"Give it up. How can one tell who has never seen the mine?"

"Right you are. It was built directly over old No. 1, and we renumbered the shafts. That was my idea."

"And why?"

P. Q. grinned.

"Thought it might pay some day to have a secret entrance to the hollow where the Jay-eye-see is located."

"And has it?"

"You bet. But we are wasting time with all this talk. Come and see for yourself. It is five miles to the mine by the trail, but we can be smoking our cigars in the office in fifteen minutes' time if——"

"Well, and the 'if'?"

"If we don't run up against Kid King. There's where the danger comes in."

"Much danger?"

"No; the Kid is away on a cattle raid. He wants fresh meat for the boys. I don't look for him back to-night. Still, he might come."

"And then?"

"It means a fight for our lives, Flood."

"You are in poor shape to fight, with no gun."

"Until we strike the office, I'm depending upon you and your partner to do the fighting; after that I shall be ready to take a hand in."

"And your brother?"

"You are wondering why I wouldn't let you shoot him, after all I said."

"I confess that I am."

"Because I want that pleasure myself," hissed P. Q., in a manner more vicious than Old King Brady could have conceived.

The mere mention of the matter seemed to excite him, and he stalked on ahead.

"By thunder, he's a fierce one, isn't he?" Harry whispered.

"Softly," replied Old King Brady. "Yes, he is certainly a terror."

"And a dangerous man to tie to."

"In every way. But what is to be done? He knows what we want to know. We must tie to him—don't you see?"

"Hurry up!" called P. Q., looking back.

The Bradys pressed forward.

They were walking along the top of the ridge which formed one of the walls of the deep hollow in which was located the Jay-eye-see mine.

It was not yet dark, by any means, and the buildings of the mine lay in plain view at their feet.

Old King Brady kept a sharp eye out, but could see no one moving down there.

Naturally he would like to have a look with his glass, but that was not to be.

Hurrying rapidly forward, they came to something which in Arizona is about as scarce as a gold mine would be in the middle of Broadway.

This was a small pond of water standing in a deep depression of the ridge.

Here P. Q. paused.

"An old crater!" exclaimed Harry.

"That's what," said P. Q. "You have been about our western mountains before, all right. This is where we used to draw our water supply from before we struck a well in Shaft No. 3. Here is the entrance to that sluice."

There was considerable undergrowth about the mouth of the crater.

Pushing in among the bushes, P. Q. led the detectives to the beginning of a big wooden sluice, made in the usual style of the far West.

It consisted of a narrow, open box of rough hemlock boards mounted on a staging, and extending down the side of the mountain, which here was covered with a growth of trees altogether unusual for Arizona.

Fixed in the sluice was a rude car.

It was just two seats of rough boards, fastened to runners.

Behind, attached to a bar, was a stout rope which ran over a big drum.

It was a queer looking arrangement altogether, and stood under the ruinous old shed which had been built to protect it from the weather.

Behind all was a stout, sliding gate.

Old King Brady saw that it was only necessary to raise the gate to let the water run down the sluice.

"There you are!" said P. Q. "That's our road to the mine. My proposition is that we go right down and head off my beloved brother. Whatever money there may be between that pair he is escorting we want, and this is the way to get it. Now, then, all aboard!"

CHAPTER VIII.

BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER.

Old King Brady surveyed the primitive car dubiously. What if P. Q. should be merely working a job to betray them into the hands of Kid King?

"Where is this going to land us?" he asked.

"Why, I thought I explained that," replied P. Q. "We land in old Shaft No. 1, directly under the office of the mine."

"P. Q.," said Old King Brady, "where is Kid King's camp?"

"Ah, ha!" chuckled Tarbox. "You don't quite trust me yet, old man."

"That's asking a good deal. Suppose the rope breaks?"

"It won't. I've shot that chute many a time."

"Suppose your chute shoots us into Kid King's camp?"

"It shoots us over it, all right. Still, the trees are pretty thick in the little valley, and it isn't one chance in ten thousand that anybody will see us."

"We can see the camp?"

"We can catch a glimpse of it as we pass over."

"And from the camp to the office—there is a way of passing, I suppose?"

P. Q. chuckled.

"You bet there is," he said. "But come! Are you going to follow me, or not? I tell you there is big money in it if you will only tie to me. Wait till night comes. There is nothing under heaven to prevent us from sneaking into the Kid's camp and capturing those directors ourselves. Once we have got them, I reckon we can make better terms for ransom than the Kid. Then there's the girl. We will have her, too. You are a pretty slick talker, I take it. You can make old man Ackerman sign a check for a good fat sum."

"A check is not what we want; it's the cash," said Old King Brady. "Well, P. Q., I'm going to risk it. We will go."

Harry and the old detective now followed P. Q. into the car.

The movement of the rope was controlled by a ratcheted arrangement at the back of the car.

"Off we go!" exclaimed P. Q., seizing the handle and giving it a twist.

The car started with a jerk and went flying down the chute.

The movement was much easier than the Bradys had expected.

Looking down, Old King Brady soon caught the lay of the land.

Instead of being one continuous descent it was broken by a narrow valley hidden from above by the thick growth of the trees.

It was now just about dusk, and as they passed over the valley lights came flashing up through the treetops, and the old detectives caught sight of log houses in the valley below.

The whirl of the car prevented talk.

All this vanished like a flash.

An instant later and the car, now near to the bottom of the second slope, with the mine in full view, suddenly went spinning underground.

All was now total darkness, and the detectives could only hold on and take what was coming.

In a moment the car stopped.

"Got a match?" asked P. Q.

Old King Brady had something better than a match—his dark lantern—but he did not dare to draw it out, of course.

He struck a match, and before he had time to see where he was P. Q. produced a lantern and pushed it forward.

Old King Brady touched the match to it, and he and Harry had a chance to study their surroundings a bit.

They were in a small room enclosed with rough boards.

The only opening was the one by which the car had entered, but there were two doors.

One of these was alongside the opening, the other directly opposite.

"There," said P. Q., pointing to the first door. "That leads straight to the Kid's camp; it is by the other we leave this place. Come on."

He opened the door, and there behind it was a mining shaft.

Instead of a ladder rude steps led up.

P. Q. hurried up the steps, the Bradys following.

At the top of the steps was a trap door.

This P. Q. slightly raised and remained listening.

"The coast seems to be clear, Flood," he said, in a whisper. "Can you hear anything?"

"Not a thing," replied Old King Brady.

"Good! They haven't come yet. Follow me."

P. Q. pushed up a trap, and there they were in the mysterious back room behind the office.

Everything was just as they had left it.

P. Q. hurried through to the office, and opening the front door, looked out.

"We have awhile to wait yet," he said. "The trap must be guarded, though. Some of the Kid's crowd are liable to come through if that precious brother of mine gives the signal."

"What is the signal?" asked Harry.

"A rifle shot."

"That will give us warning. What is to be done?"

"There is only one thing to do."

"Shoot?"

"Yes."

"That will cut off all our chances," said Old King Brady.

"It will save our lives, too. If we don't shoot they will."

Little more was said while they sat waiting.

P. Q. remained at the front door, watching out. Old King Brady and Harry took up their stations in the back room and watched the trap.

"We are close run," the latter whispered.

"You bet we are," was the reply.

"For my part, I don't see how it is all coming out."

"I can only guess at it myself."

"That fellow is desperate enough to do anything. Do you think he is armed?"

"I think he has a revolver, in spite of what he says."

"That's just my idea. Do you propose to do any shooting in case this trap comes up?"

"Don't ask me, Harry. I shall do whatever seems best under the circumstances. I hope it won't come to that."

Old King Brady had scarcely spoken when a quick, nervous call came from P. Q. at the door.

"Hist! They are coming! Raise the trap!"

Harry instantly obeyed.

P. Q. waited only to see the party enter the mine yard and make sure they were J. C. Tarbox and those he was escorting.

He darted back into the room then.

"Quick! Vanish!" he whispered. "Up with the trap."

Harry threw it up.

It raised noiselessly and easily on well-oiled hinges.

P. Q. hurried down the steps, the Bradys following.

"I hear no rifle shot," said Harry. "He can't be intending to give the signal."

"He knows the Kid is away. He means to play a different game."

"Enough said. He intends to run them through to the camp himself."

"Perhaps. Can't say. We will lay for him here, though."

"And you mean to kill him?"

"I do."

"Don't!"

"Why not?"

"Leave him to me, and I will send him to the penitentiary where he belongs."

"You?"

"Yes; twenty years in state prison is worse than death."

"By thunder, you are right. But how can you bring it about? He is a lawyer; he'll get the best of you every time."

"I think not," replied Old King Brady, calmly.

Something in his speech and manner must have betrayed him.

"By thunder, I know you now!" breathed P. Q. "You are the Bradys, detectives, surest thing."

It was no time for further concealment.

Quick as a flash Old King Brady whipped off the false beard, dashed down the old cap he had worn, and producing the well-known big white hat from some mysterious concealment, clapped it on his head.

"Old King Brady, at your service!" he exclaimed. "Now, P. Q., let them come on, and leave everything to me. Much obliged to you for your help so far."

"Huh!" muttered the man. "Just as I thought. I suspected you from the first."

"They are coming!" whispered Harry. "I hear them walking overhead."

P. Q. pulled at the door next to the sluice opening.

It yielded, and the entrance to a narrow tunnel, which had once been the drift of the old shaft, was revealed.

"We will hide in here and wait," he said. "If he means to carry them through to the Kid's camp we will be ready; but look here, where do I come in on this new deal if I stand by you?"

"Half of the reward for the capture of Kid King, if we get him. Half of anything we may get in the way of reward from the three millionaires."

"That suits, providing you send J. C. to the pen."

"Settled. Douse the glim. Someone is coming, and no ray of light must betray us. Leave all to me."

Heavy footfalls could be heard on the stairs leading down the old abandoned shaft, for the door of the little room had been left wide open.

No one spoke.

Old King Brady knew that J. C. Tarbox must be alone.

He had his rifle ready, and the challenge was on the tip of his tongue, when the door was suddenly thrown open by J. C. Tarbox, lantern and revolver in hand.

This was the time when Old King Brady was too late.

"You!"

"You!"

Both brothers shouted the word, J. C. dropping the lantern.

Like a flash both fired revolvers. P. Q. had drawn his before Old King Brady could interfere.

Two shouts!

Two shots!

Two dead men!

It was brother against brother.

A fearful tragedy had been enacted there at the bottom of the shaft.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SKIRMISH IN THE CANYON.

It all happened so suddenly that the Bradys scarcely had time to exclaim before the end came.

"By thunder! They have killed each other!" Harry gasped.

"Like the Kilkenny cats!" muttered Old King Brady. "Well, well!"

"We had better be getting upstairs before anyone comes. The shots may have attracted attention."

"Wait a moment. The first move is to make sure they are actually dead."

"That's what. Guess there is no doubt on that score."

"You are right. P. Q. has been shot through the heart. J. C. got it in the neck. The bullet must have cut the jugular, I should say, from the way he bleeds."

"I hear no one. We had best be on the move."

"A strange ending to strange business," muttered Old King Brady.

He stepped over the dead brothers, passed through the room and, closely followed by Harry, ascended the steps.

The trap door was closed.

Old King Brady pushed it up and passed into the office, which was lighted up.

Alice Ackerman was seated at the desk. J. Jones-Smythe, the dude, stood near the outer door.

The sight of the Bradys with their rifles was too much for the latter's nerves.

"Kid King! Betrayed, just as I expected!" he yelled.

"Then he dashed through the door, shouting:

"Run, Alice! Run!"

"Hold on, there! We are friends, you fool!" cried Harry, darting after him.

If he had stood his ground Harry's reassuring words might have brought the coward back.

But, seeing Harry running after him with a rifle settled the case for J. Jones-Smythe.

"Help! Murder! Spare my life!" he yelled.

He made a dash for the horses, which stood unhitched near the boarding-house.

Flinging himself in the saddle and crouching low, he urged the horse off up the mountain trail, Harry's shouts to stop having no further effect than to increase his fear.

Meanwhile Old King Brady was dealing with an entirely different sort of person.

Alice made no move to run away.

"Who are you?" she demanded, facing the detective boldly. "Do you make war on women? Are you that brave outlaw, Kid King?"

"My dear young lady, I am no murderous outlaw," replied Old King Brady. "I am the New York detective hired by your father to capture Kid King."

"Indeed! Then allow me to say you've made a pretty mess of your job. Where's Mr. Tarbox? What are you doing here? I understood you had given up the case and gone back to New York."

"Mr. Tarbox is dead. He has just been killed by his twin brother, who was killed, in turn, by him."

"Dead!"

"Yes, and it is well for you that he is. He was a consummate rascal, and his only intention was to betray you into the hands of Kid King."

"Old man, are you telling me the truth?"

"What I tell you is just as certainly true as that your escort has run away and deserted you, for here comes my partner back without him. Harry, this is Miss Ackerman. What about that fellow outside?"

"The idiot! I couldn't make him understand!" cried Harry, flushed with his exertions.

"Let the coward go, and I hope Kid King captures him!" exclaimed Alice, spitefully. "Gentlemen, I demand proof of your identity. I am in your hands, but you will find no coward in me, even if I am a woman. I want to know who I am dealing with before I say another word."

"And quite right, too," said Old King Brady, displaying his shield. "You see who I am. Now let me explain. We have got you on our hands, and must look out for you. Are you satisfied now?"

"I am. Where is my father and his friends?"

"In Kid King's camp, so far as I know."

"Why did you give up the case?"

"Actually we never gave it up. Your father grossly insulted me, and if no harm had come to him through so doing we should promptly have thrown up his commission. As it was, we never relaxed our efforts for a moment. This unfortunate business was entirely his own fault."

"I can believe that. You need not say any more. My father has handled so many hogs in his lifetime that he often forgets that he is one himself. Well, go on with your explanation. As for that crazy jackass who undertook to act as my escort, let him go."

The Bradys' story took but a few moments in the telling.

"I suspected that man Tarbox from the first," Alice then said. "I was very reluctant to trust myself in his hands, but what could I do? He assured me that all Kid King wanted was money, and that he had influence with him. He claimed that all that was necessary was to come here and deliver up the money to one whom he claimed would meet us, and my father and his friends would be promptly restored to freedom."

"Is it so?" replied Old King Brady. "Of course I cannot tell what his plan was, and no one will ever know now; but, personally, I have not the least doubt that his only intention was to sell you to Kid King."

"Now we will admit that. What is to be done?"

"I see but one way. You must be escorted back to Flagstaff, first of all."

"Suppose I refuse to go without my father?"

"You can, of course; but I hope you won't. Have you the money with you?"

"I have. I have twelve thousand dollars. Don't you think I am rather brave to tell you this out plainly?"

"Think as you please about that. You run no risk at all."

"You intended to push ahead and try to rescue my father and his friends?"

"That was our original plan, as I said."

"Then why not carry it out? What's the use in changing on my account? I am ready to pay this money."

"You will pay nothing, with my consent. Let us get back to Flagstaff. There I will introduce you to the sheriff, and he will be forced to listen to us. We will return with a posse, use the knowledge we have obtained through P. Q. Tarbox and force our way into the outlaw's camp."

For a few moments Alice sat there in silence, tapping her foot upon the floor.

"Well, I suppose you know best," she said, at last. "Do as you please. I am on your hands."

"One thing before we start," said Old King Brady. "My

advice is that you leave the money here in this office. We can hide it somewhere. In that way it will not only be made safe, but in case we should be attacked by Kid King on the road we should have something to hold out to him as an inducement to let us live."

"You are speaking two words for yourself and your partner and one for me."

"Put it that way if you wish. There is no telling what may happen. I am merely giving you the benefit of my experience."

"Let it be so. Where shall we hide it?"

"In the most unlikely place possible. I should say if we put it in the ash pit of that stove it would be pretty sure to be safe."

"Unless someone should take a notion to light a fire in the stove."

"Which is hardly likely while the weather remains so warm."

"I'll do just as you say. Allow me to retire a moment to the other room and I'll hand you the money."

"Certainly," replied Old King Brady, and with Harry he stepped outside.

"A smart girl, that," Young King Brady remarked.

"That's what she is. She's as near to being a lady as her father is far from being a gentleman."

"I hope she is not engaged to that cowardly jackass."

"Go slow, Harry. No falling in love with a millionaire's daughter."

"What nonsense."

"I only give you warning. That would spoil the pie altogether and break up the firm; but hush! She is calling."

They returned to the office, where they found Miss Alice with a large roll of bills in her hand.

Old King Brady, reconsidering his suggestion of the stove, opened the desk and placed the money in one of the pigeon-holes, with a lot of papers in front.

"Now comes the question of getting away," he remarked.

"There are only two horses. My partner and I will have to ride double. That means slow work, and I think we had best make a quick start."

"Ready any time," replied Alice, and in a few moments the start away from the Jay-eye-see was made.

All these things had followed one another so rapidly, and the results had been so different from what the Bradys expected, that the old detective required time to think, and for a good while they rode on in silence.

Harry had half expected to overtake Mr. J. Jones-Smythe, but they did not up to the time they reached the relay house.

They passed it without stopping, and entered the dark canyon through which, in order to reach Flagstaff, it would be necessary to travel many miles.

"This is the worst part of the journey," remarked Alice.

"It is a question whether the horses can find their way through here, it is so dark."

"Who says more light?" cried a thin, piping voice upon the rocks overhead. "Turn on the electric, boys!"

"Kid King!" gasped Harry. "We are in the soup now."

Before Old King Brady had time to answer the light from a powerful reflecting lantern was flashed down into the valley.

There in front of them were five masked and mounted men drawn up in line.

Kid King was not among them.

This most peculiar badman was said to seldom lead his own gang, but always to hang around, working on the outside.

"Deal gently with the lady, boys!" he cried. "You can shoot the Bradys offhand."

"Gently nothing!" said Alice, suddenly whipping out a revolver and firing.

"Clear the way there! You Bradys, follow me if you are men!"

The plucky girl had started it.

The Bradys could hardly hold back.

They were ready with their revolvers, too.

Harry was seated in front, and urged the horse to a gallop.

Firing right and left, they pressed closely behind Alice, who was doing the same.

And the shots told.

Two men fell, three horses dropped.

Kid King's voice, yelling and swearing, could be heard on the rocks.

At the same instant the light suddenly went out; how or why Harry could not tell.

"Let 'em go!" bawled the Kid. "Their time will soon come."

Harry could hear him scrambling over the rocks as he dashed down the canyon, pressing close at the heels of Alice's horse.

"By gracious, that was well done, Governor!" he exclaimed at last.

There was no answer.

To his utter surprise, Old King Brady was no longer in the saddle.

"Hold on, miss!" he shouted. "I've lost my partner somehow!"

Whether Alice heard or not is a question.

At all events, she did not answer, and her horse continued the same mad gait.

Harry reined in, however.

Between Old King Brady's safety and that of this bold young woman who seemed so well able to take care of herself there was but one choice to make.

All was dark behind him, and he had gone too far to hear the voices of the outlaws behind.

Where had Old King Brady lost himself?

The shots had been returned by the outlaws.

Four or five had been fired, any one of which might have done the business for the detective.

The distance covered since the starting had been at least half a mile.

"Governor! Governor!" shouted Harry, at the risk of drawing danger upon himself.

There was no answer but the echo from the rocky walls of the canyon.

Again Harry shouted, this time to Alice.

The only response was the pounding of the hoofs of her horse dying away in the distance.

"Confound her!" muttered Harry. "She is thinking only of herself."

But Alice had not discovered his absence as yet, as Harry afterward learned.

With his revolver cocked and ready, Harry now made his way back to the scene of action, ready to share the fate of his partner rather than to desert him in this emergency.

He soon reached the mouth of the canyon where the brief skirmish had taken place.

But it was only to discover that he was too late.

There lay the horses, one wounded and groaning and two dead.

No trace of the outlaws could be discovered.

Young King Brady had produced his dark lantern, and he flashed it about in every direction.

"It looks as though we didn't wound anyone very bad," he muttered. "And now they have captured the Governor! Confound the luck! This turns all our plans upside down. I hardly know what to do next."

What he did was to ride back to the relay house.

Here it was just the same.

The place was deserted, and the rocky trail left no trace of the horses.

Giving it up in despair at last, Young King Brady turned his horse and rode back into the canyon.

"This is a job for the sheriff, if I can get him interested," he said to himself. "I expect they have carried him off to the Kid's camp, and it is not to be thought of for me to tackle it single-handed and alone."

CHAPTER X.

OLD KING BRADY DINES WITH KID KING.

Harry was right.

Old King Brady had been captured by Kid King.

It was all an accident.

The old detective had not been shot.

Just after the horse passed the masked men he gave a sudden leap forward, scared by a shot.

The ball whistled past Old King Brady's left ear, and he involuntarily ducked.

This movement, together with the spring of the horse, caused him to lose his balance and slip off over the animal's flanks.

The detective fell heavily.

Striking on the back of his head, for a moment he lay there half unconscious, to be jerked to his feet later by rough hands.

Several men surrounded him.

They were no longer masked.

Kid King was there, too, and stood flashing a dark lantern in his face.

"It's Old King Brady!" he cried. "Treat him gently, boys. It will be my privilege to make him suffer just a little bit before he gives up the ghost, just as surely as the sun is sure to rise."

"How about the young one?" growled one of the men who held the detective.

"Never you mind the young one, Bull Buffett," replied the Kid. "We are bound for home, and are not chasing Flagstaff way to-night."

"There was the gal, too. It was her who shot Gus in the arm."

"Let him be thankful it was not in his heart he got the bullet."

"But the cash! That dude said she had it onto her, you know."

"Never mind, I say! Do you dare to question my will?"

"I hain't doing no questioning, cap," growled Bull Buffett. "I'm only makin' a few suggestions, that's all."

"Don't want 'em. The money is sure to come our way sooner or later. How many more were shot?"

"Jim Peters got a graze on the thigh. It was only them two."

"We got out lucky. Now get on the move."

All hurried on out of the canyon, the Kid and most of the others walking. The two who still had horses rode.

Passing behind the relay house in the direction P. Q. had led the Bradys, they came upon a band of ten mounted men, and with them, secured to a horse with his hands tied behind his back, was the wretched J. Jones-Smythe.

The dude was deathly pale, and it was easily seen that he had been scared out of the few wits he possessed.

"What's the row, cap?" demanded one of the men, coming forward.

"A little skirmish in the canyon, that's all," replied Kid King. "How many spare horses have we here, Whitey?"

"Two."

"Tie this old man on to one of them. You fellows must double up as best you can. Lively now! We want to get right down into the camp."

Not a word from Old King Brady.

It was time enough to speak when he was spoken to, he thought.

Bitterly he regretted his want of care, but for which he might now be with Harry and Alice.

Moreover, any protest would have been quite useless, as he well knew.

The tying was quickly done, and the whole party rode off over the ridge.

The Kid, mounted on a fine mottled broncho, was in the lead.

Instead of taking the way to the sluice, as P. Q. had done, Kid King turned aside to the left; went down the slope for some distance, and then entered a narrow canyon, the opening of which was almost concealed by a dense growth of trees.

"The road to the secret valley," thought Old King Brady. "Well, I am going to learn the other side of the question now."

The ride was a comparatively short one.

Soon they entered a valley, the width of which was less than fifty feet.

On both sides rocky, wooded slopes rose high above them.

They turned and rode back in the direction of the relay house, coming in a few moments to a small collection of log huts.

Overhead Old King Brady could see the sluice, and he knew that at last he had reached the camp of Kid King.

Men and women came out to greet them.

Dogs barked, and all was confusion, for everybody persisted in talking at once.

And Old King Brady, listening to their talk, knew that the death of the Tarbox brothers had not been discovered.

Several of the horses were loaded down with fresh meat.

P. Q. had evidently told the truth.

Kid King was just returning from his cattle raid.

But the Kid himself had disappeared now.

The next Old King Brady saw of him was half an hour later, when he was led into one of the huts, the interior of which was fitted up in a style worth describing.

It looked like the den of some millionaire college boy.

Costly rugs lay scattered over the floor. There were expensive hangings on the walls, which were also decorated with pictures in high-priced frames.

Guns, swords, fencing foils and other arms of quaint and curious patterns were also used in the decorations.

The furniture was simple, but of the very finest.

The whole cost of furnishing this room must have been great.

The Kid received Old King Brady reclining on a sort of Turkish divan, covered with pink silk, over which a fur rug had been thrown.

He was dressed in fancy costume, and wore a valuable diamond in his four-in-hand.

How such a person had ever succeeded in getting the upper hand of the rough miners about him Old King Brady failed to understand.

There were two of the Mexican boys present.

They were dressed in white pajamas, one standing at the head of the Kid's couch and the other at the foot.

The Kid, who was smoking a long Oriental pipe, called out to the old detective to come forward and fear nothing.

The assurance did not come amiss, for at the door stood two of the same guards who had watched over the banquet, each with a rifle in his hand.

"Place Mr. Brady a chair, Pedro!" cried the Kid. "With his hands tied behind him he must feel rather uncomfortable. It isn't pleasant to see a good man suffer. Brady, sit down."

"Anything to oblige your majesty," replied Old King Brady, bowing with mock politeness as he seated himself in the chair.

"Ah! Your majesty is good. I like that, Brady. Do you know I am a very remarkable man?"

"That's what you are."

"I'm glad to hear you admit it. Well, I'm not bashful when it comes to speaking about myself. I suppose you have learned by this time that here I am the whole thing."

"Mr. King, I have made that interesting discovery."

"And why do you consider me a remarkable man, may I ask?"

"Why? Because in all my experience I never knew a dude to get the upper hand of a lot of Western miners, and that is just what you appear to have done."

"You are a man of sense, and have hit the nail square on the head. It is just what I have done. Know how I did it, old man?"

"I am waiting to be told."

"Look at me! What am I but a little runt, with nothing but good looks to recommend me?"

"Nothing."

"Thank you. I was in hopes that you would say I was good-hearted. You would have helped your case some if you had, for I may as well tell you that I am very vain."

"Oh, I see that. You need not go into details."

"Thank you, again."

"Suppose you come to the point?"

"Old man, I'm coming, and let me advise you not to get too new, or something may happen sooner than I intend."

"Go on! Go on!" said Old King Brady. "Say your say and be done with it. I haven't much patience left."

"I see you haven't. And to oblige you I will come directly to the point. I gained the upper hand with these men because I am absolutely square with them, because I am a dead shot, a crack rider, absolutely fearless, and above all, absolutely without the love of money. Whatever haul we make it all goes to them—I keep nothing. At the present moment I haven't a dollar in my pockets. The bargain is that they keep all and provide for my few simple wants. I amuse them. They regard me as a queer little mascot, and so humor me, and the why of it is that I have a great head for thinking out profitable schemes, and, moreover, my schemes always succeed."

"As in the case of the Jay-eye-see mine," remarked Old King Brady. "Well, I guess you tell the truth."

"Man, of course I tell the truth, and you wouldn't dare to tell me that I lied."

"I shall not try it."

"Wise. Now listen. I took the fancy to spare you and your partner. Know why?"

"No."

"Because I like to read about your adventures. It is one of my favorite pastimes. When I heard that you were coming out against me—and I got word of it at the very start—I said to my right bower, Bull Buffett—you met him back there—'we can't spare the Bradys. Whatever else happens, let no harm come to them.' So when I found you in my power I entertained you right royally, did I not?"

"You certainly did."

"Of course I did, and how have you rewarded me? Instead of going on about your business, as I gave you the chance to do, you came back to monkey with the buzz-saw and interfere with my business. What can you expect?"

"Very little from you, my friend. I waste no time in expecting."

"It is just as well. In the end I presume I shall kill you; but I mean to get all the fun I can out of you first."

"Pitch in. Anything to make things pleasant."

"All right. The show now begins. You are in for a night of it. Are you hungry?"

"Somewhat so."

Kid King clapped his hands and, as though he had been some Oriental despot, the two Mexican boys flew to obey the command, which they appeared to perfectly understand.

The furniture was moved about and a round table spread for a meal, with places set for two.

"You are a great fellow for eating, aren't you?" remarked Old King Brady, watching these preparations.

"That's what I am. I believe in the comforts of life when I can get them, and I do get them here."

The table was now set, and the Kid called out in Spanish to bring in the dinner. One of the Mexican boys flew to obey.

The other got an order, which Old King Brady did not understand, and left the hut also.

In a few moments the boy returned, followed by two of the outlaws, Bull Buffett and the man called Whitey.

Between them they led Mr. Ackerman, looking sour and solemn, with his hands tied behind his back.

The Chicago millionaire glared at Old King Brady and frowned at the Kid.

He did not say anything, however.

Old King Brady judged that he had talked himself out some time before.

But what attracted the old detective's attention most was the appearance of the two outlaws.

As is well known, Old King Brady is a perfect expert in studying faces.

If ever he had seen the faces of two dissatisfied, rebellious men, these were the ones.

And he made a careful note of this, feeling that it might come in handy to remember later on.

"Unloose the prisoners! Stand guard outside while we eat!" cried the Kid, with all the manner of a prince.

Bull Buffett cut Mr. Ackerman's bonds, Whitey performing the same kind office for Old King Brady.

Without receiving as much as a word of thanks from the Kid, the two men then withdrew.

"Now, then, Brady, I invite you to dine with me," said the Kid. "You will draw up to the table. Some days ago this man here insulted you by refusing you a seat at his table. Since then circumstances have changed. Aaron Ackerman, with all your millions, you are no better than anyone else, and not nearly as good as many a poor fellow who has not one cent to his name. You made your money by killing hogs. Mr. Brady makes his by catching thieves. As for me, I despise money, and that is the reason I swipe all I can lay my hands on. Which stands for the most, the pork butcher, the thief-catcher, or the thief?"

Ackerman glared, but made no reply.

"Speak! Answer!" cried the Kid, whipping out a little deringer with a handle mounted with silver and mother-of-pearl and pointing it at the millionaire's head.

"Am I here to answer conundrums?" growled Ackerman.

"I don't know what you want me to say."

The Kid burst out laughing and put up the pistol.

"You have said it," he chuckled. "I merely wanted you to show yourself up for the ignorant ass that you are. Now then, Mr. Multi-millionaire, you will wait upon me and Old King Brady at dinner, and see that you do your work well, or I'll make you dance a hornpipe by peppering your toes with little lead pills from that pretty pill box I just showed you. Here comes the dinner. Get down to your work."

Three of the Mexican boys entered now, each bearing covered dishes, which they placed on a side table and then went away for more.

And Old King Brady, drawing up to the table, ate dinner with Kid King.

It was as fine a repast as the old detective ever sat down to.

Their wants were clumsily attended to by the great Chicago millionaire, Aaron Ackerman.

Not a word of protest escaped him.

It would hardly have been safe, for outside the tent stood Bull Buffett and Whitey with rifles ready.

"Some day those fellows will turn on this little ridiculous jackanapes," thought Old King Brady. "It is not in the nature of things that Arizona badmen should stand this sort of thing very long."

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRADYS' LUCK AGAIN.

Young King Brady had not gone any great distance before he met Alice Ackerman returning on the trail.

"Where in the world have you been?" she exclaimed.

"I did not miss you until a little while ago."

"I tried my best to make you hear," was the reply, "but I didn't succeed. I had to turn back."

"And why? Where is the old man?"

"That's what I can't tell you. I suddenly discovered that Mr. Brady was missing. I went back to find what had become of him, but I didn't succeed."

"This is a pretty state of affairs!" cried Alice. "Every moment we seem to find ourselves in a worse fix."

"It is as bad for me as it is for you, miss. From the way you speak one would imagine that you were the only one in trouble; but it isn't so, by any means."

Alice bit her lip and made no reply.

"From your standpoint it is like this," continued Harry. "You imagine that because we are detectives we can make no mistakes and get into no trouble. The mistake all began with your father's way of treating us. But for that our work might have been accomplished by this time."

"Very well, Mr. Brady. I accept your correction," replied Alice, with dignity. "As matters stand, it is for you to say what shall be done next."

This left Harry a little ashamed of his plain speaking, and he made haste to throw a little more agreeable tone into his remarks.

"There is only one thing for us to do," he said, "and that is for us to get back to Flagstaff and see what we can do with the sheriff. I know the secret entrance to Kid King's camp. If we can get help and attack these outlaws we may come out ahead yet."

They rode on in silence for some distance.

Young King Brady was only too well pleased when they at last rode into Flagstaff long after midnight, and he had seen Miss Ackerman safely located in the Grand Occidental hotel.

As there was no use in further concealment of his identity, Harry made himself known to the hotel clerk and engaged a room.

His slumbers were broken and uneasy, however.

When he arose the next morning he felt that he might just as well have tried to sleep in the saddle as in that bed.

Immediately after breakfast, without waiting for Miss Ackerman, who had not yet put in an appearance, Young King Brady started out to look up the sheriff, whose name he had been informed was Magrath, and who carried on the business of a maker of mining tools at the lower end of the town.

Sheriff Magrath was found in his shop, with his coat off and working at the forge.

He proved to be a cold, reticent man, and after listening to Young King Brady's request he snapped out:

"Well, and what do you expect me to do?"

"It is not a question of what I expect; it is what you are willing to do," replied Harry, quietly. "This lady is in trouble. My partner has been captured by Kid King, and the three directors of the Jay-eye-see mine still remain prisoners in the hands of the outlaws. I am an officer of the law; so are you. It seems to me it is up to you to give me the help I ask for. Doesn't it strike you that way?"

"It doesn't strike me that way at all," replied the sheriff, coldly. "I have not been requested by any of the friends of the directors to take this matter up. When I am it will be time enough to act."

"Then you decline to help me?" asked Harry, in despair.

"I do. I don't recognize you in the matter at all. I don't know you, and I don't want to know you. There is only one man in this town who can start me out on a raid against Kid King."

"And who is that?" queried Harry.

"J. C. Tarbox. Until the mine is given up to the new company he has charge of it. If you want to do anything you will have to do it through him."

Harry immediately left the sheriff, thankful that he had not mentioned the fate of the Tarbox twins.

"That man is a rascal," he said to himself. "Tarbox seems to have had everybody subsidized in the interest of Kid King."

Young King Brady now started back to the hotel, entirely at a loss what to do.

Stopping at the railroad station a moment to see the westbound express come in, Young King Brady was amused at watching the baggageman tumbling off a lot of cheap grips and bundles, which appeared to be the property of a rough looking crowd of men who pressed forward to claim them.

In charge of this gang was a quiet, soldierly looking man who, after assisting to get things straightened out, marched the whole gang over to the hotel where the Bradys had tied up the night before.

Harry was attracted to him at once.

"Who are these men?" he asked himself. "Evidently they are strangers in town, and it is equally evident that they are about to proceed to some work."

Of course it could be nothing but railroad building or mining.

"If I could only get those fellows to help me," thought Harry as he watched them crossing the track.

He crossed, too, and stood by the brick building in which Mr. Tarbox's office was situated.

He was still standing there pondering over the situation when the gentleman in charge of the gang came sauntering up.

"Can you tell me where I can find Mr. J. C. Tarbox?" he asked.

At once the whole situation dawned upon Young King Brady.

He remembered that Mr. Ackerman had informed Old King Brady that a gang of men were coming to the Jay-eye-see on the twentieth of the month to open up the mine.

This was the twentieth, and these undoubtedly were the men.

"If you want to know about Mr. Tarbox, sir, you have struck the only person in this town who can give you information about him," he replied.

"How is that?" demanded the man.

"May I ask your name?"

"Well, I am not ashamed of it. I am Captain Jack Woods."

"And mine is Brady. I am a New York detective. You might have heard of me."

"I have heard of the Brady detectives. Are you one of them?"

"I am. Mr. Tarbox had an office upstairs here, but you won't find him there now."

"And why? You have got some mystery up your sleeve, young fellow. Speak it right out."

"First, let me ask you if you are connected with the Jay-eye-see mine?"

"I am the new superintendent. I have just come in town with a gang of miners engaged in Colorado and New Mexico to open up the mine, Mr. Tarbox represents the owners. My orders are to see him."

"Then you never will see him," replied Harry, quietly, "for he is dead."

"Who killed him?"

"He was killed by his own brother, whom he killed in turn, I am the only man here who knows it. Captain Woods, this is a most fortunate meeting, as you will admit when you hear what I have to say."

"I rather think I am up against serious business," remarked Captain Woods. "Suppose we slide into the Howling Wilderness saloon next door and talk matters over. This looks as though Kid King might have been getting in his fine work again."

"You'll find his hand at the bottom of it," replied Harry. They adjourned to the Howling Wilderness saloon, where Captain Woods, like a man of sound common sense, which he was, listened to all Young King Brady had to say.

"You are in a bad box and your partner is in a worse one," he then remarked, "but it seems to me I'm in the worst of all."

"How so?" asked Harry, rather surprised.

"Because here I am with all these men on my hands. There are thirty of them. I'm out their fares and a lot of other expenses. If Kid King kills the directors, then it's good-by to my money and my chance at the Jay-eye-see!"

"Which brings me to my proposition," answered Harry, promptly. "I hold the information. You have got the men. All we need is horses——"

"Oh, I have those all arranged for," broke in Captain Woods. "My brother keeps the livery stable here, you know."

"Good enough!" cried Harry, aroused to enthusiasm now. Then let you and I head this gang and go gunning for Kid King."

"Done," said Captain Woods. "I'm your man. I don't propose to be beaten out of my job by a little, sawed-off like that fellow—not much."

"And your miners?"

"Will follow me to a man. Most of them have worked for me before. They'll fight, and don't you forget it."

"Settled," said Harry. "All we need then are the arms and horses. Let's go and see about them now."

They went, and this proved to be the easiest part of it, for the horses were all ready.

All the men were then armed.

Harry hurried to the hotel, and finding Alice Ackerman at a late breakfast, explained the turn of affairs.

The plucky girl immediately announced her intention of accompanying the expedition.

And so it came about that shortly before noon Young King Brady found himself at the head of a well-armed force, riding back over the Bendigo trail.

And thus it ever seems to be with these world-renowned detectives.

Just as matters look at their worst something always turns up to let them out as it had done in this case.

It was the Bradys' luck again.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Kid King's supper was a thing of sweetness long-drawn out.

By the time it was all over Kid King was too drunk to care for any further entertainment.

He just rolled over on the divan and went to sleep.

Bull Buffett then led Mr. Ackerman away, and Whitey escorted Old King Brady, who had eaten but little and drank less, off to a log hut on the outskirts of the camp.

Here the old detective was bound hand and foot and tumbled over on the floor alongside of J. Jones-Smythe, the dude, and left to his own reflections.

Worn out by the fatigue of his exertions, the old detective soon dropped off asleep undisturbed by the grumblings of Mr. J. Jones-Smythe, whom he paid no attention to at all.

Old King Brady slept until long after sunrise, and he might just as well have slept longer, for it was several hours after he awoke before anyone came near the hut.

Two men then appeared, and the prisoners were allowed to eat under guard, after which they were tied up again and left as before.

J. Jones-Smythe then began his groanings.

It was about this time—it was at least four o'clock in the afternoon—that the sharp ears of the old detective told him that a large party of men had ridden off out of the camp.

Instead of the noise and confusion from loud shouts and angry talk, which had been going on all morning, almost complete silence followed.

Before this Old King Brady had caught the sound of a

guard pacing up and down, and from time to time the man had looked into the hut.

Now he could hear nothing of him.

It seemed to Old King Brady that this was a good time to act.

"Oh, I shall die! I know I shall," Jones-Smythe was groaning. "I wish I had stayed in Chicago. I never ought to have come."

"You have made that same remark about one hundred and fifty-five times, young man," said Old King Brady, impatiently. "Will you allow me to make a remark to you?"

"Why, I presume you have the privilege of saying what you like," snapped the dude.

"I have got poor front teeth," said Old King Brady. "They are about worn out."

"And what's that to me?" snapped J. Jones-Smythe.

"A whole lot. If my teeth were good I should roll over and gnaw away those cords with which you are tied, for they seem to have let up on the guard outside. How about yours?"

"They are all sound."

"Then the sooner you get to work at my cords the better. Now seems to be the only chance we are likely to get."

"By jove, that is a good scheme," said Jones-Smythe, getting interested. "I believe I could if I tried."

"Of course you could. Try."

And Jones-Smythe did try.

What is more, he succeeded.

It took a little time, to be sure, but at the end of that time Old King Brady stood a free man.

A knife which he had managed to conceal when he was searched did the work for the dude.

Both free now, Old King Brady started in to act.

He first crawled to the door of the hut and peered out.

There was no guard. The nearest hut was perhaps fifty yards away.

Old King Brady, who had kept his wits about him the night before, knew that this was the hut in which he had dined with Kid King.

For a long time the old detective lay there peering out, studying the camp and pondering on the course he ought to pursue.

He could see the women moving from hut to hut, or standing talking in the open.

Now and then a man would join them.

He saw two men away down at the lower end of the camp seated on a flat rock playing cards and drinking now and then from a demijohn which stood beside them.

Discipline seemed to have become entirely relaxed, and certain it was that most of the men had quit the camp.

But had Kid King gone, too?

"Aren't we going to make a move soon?" asked J. Jones-Smythe, anxiously.

"You don't make a move until I give you the word," said Old King Brady. "I'm going now. Stay where you are if you want to be saved."

Leaving the dude to obey or not, Old King Brady arose and made a quick dart across the open space which separated him from the first hut.

He was not seen.

He approached the hut in the rear and crouched down listening.

Not a sound could be heard inside.

The only window here opened into a room behind the Kid's quarters.

Old King Brady peered through the grimy glass.

The sight which met his gaze was remarkable.

There were the Mexican cowboys, all of them, and the Chinaman who had waited on the table at the mine, as well.

They lay upon the floor half undressed. Some were just sprawled out, and others with their heads pillowed on each other's breasts.

One held an opium pipe in his hand and there were several others lying around.

This told the story.

The Kid's bodyguard was deep in the dope. But what about the Kid himself?

Old King Brady did not enter the hut then.

His hopes were rising.

He pushed on to the next hut.

Behind him was the wooded slope of the mountain, the rise which separated him from the Jay-eye-see mine.

Already he had discovered a tunnel-like opening in the rocks.

This opening was directly behind the second hut, through the window of which the detective now gazed.

"Thunder! I have hit it!" he muttered, as he peered inside.

He opened the door then and crept in.

Old King Brady had struck the prison of the three millionaires.

There they lay, each in his bunk, with his hands tied behind him and one leg made fast to the edge of the bunk by means of a cord passed through a hole.

It was Aaron Ackerman who first caught sight of the detective.

"Mr. Brady!" he burst out. "If you are the man I take you to be you will help us! I shall die if I put in another night here."

"You don't need to appeal to me," replied the detective, coldly.

He produced his knife and advanced toward the bunk.

He cut old Ackerman free, following with Hixon and Wells.

"Up! Keep close to me!" he breathed.

"Where are you taking us?" growled Ackerman. "You seemed mighty thick with the Kid last night. How do I know that you are not standing in with him in this deal?"

"Say that again and I'll knock you down, you old idiot!" snapped the detective. "You don't deserve help. Follow me or not as you please."

They followed him meekly enough after that.

Scarce had the detective stepped outside when he ran into J. Jones-Smythe.

"You!" he whispered.

"Oh, I couldn't stand it! Weally, I couldn't!" whined the dude. "I just sneaked after you, and here I am."

"It is just as well," said Old King Brady. "Gentlemen, you see that opening in the rock there in front of us. Pass inside and wait for me. Hear me now, and heed what I say. Your safety all depends upon you obeying me to the letter. Now go."

Not until they had disappeared within the opening did Old King Brady move again.

Once more he stood at the window of the next hut peering in.

The situation was just the same.

"Is it a case of the cat being away and the mice having a play, or is the Kid in the same boat himself?" Old King Brady thought.

There was but one way to settle it, and that was to go in and see.

Old King Brady had been deprived of his revolvers. He had no other weapon than the pocket knife he had managed to conceal.

Trying the door and finding it unfastened, he stole in, stepping cautiously over the sleeping forms.

The front door of the hut was closed, and the windows had been darkened by heavy hangings.

It was the Kid's room, though, and there lay the Kid himself upon the divan half dressed, with an opium lay-out beside him.

He started up as Old King Brady entered.

His reddened eyes and ghastly pallor betrayed his condition.

"Brady!" he gasped. "You!"

Thrusting his hand behind him, he whipped out a revolver.

"Stop!" breathed the detective. "Kid King, your life is in danger. Your men have risen up against you. They are at the end of the camp now, ready to do business. They mean to kill you. If you want to live put down that revolver and follow me."

"It isn't so! It can't be! You lie!" gasped the Kid, staggering to his feet.

He reeled and fell heavily against the old detective.

Champagne, whisky and the opium pipe had done the business for Kid King.

Quick as a wink Old King Brady had him by the throat and had wrenched the revolver away.

"Stop! Stop! You are choking me to death!" gasped the Kid.

"Hold your noise! One cry and I fire!" hissed the detective.

He let go of his throat, clutched the Kid's arm, and added:

"You follow me!"

There was no attempt at resistance.

It is probable that Kid King was brave enough in his normal condition, but certainly he presented a perfect picture of a coward now.

"Don't kill me! Don't kill me, Brady!" he whined, once they were outside. "I meant to let you go. I really did."

"How many men have you killed in your time?" demanded Old King Brady, dragging him on.

"Oh, I don't know! Ten or fifteen, I reckon; but I don't want to die! I'm not fit. I'll show you where Ackerman and the others are if you'll let me live."

"I'll show you where they are, all right," replied the detective, dragging him in through the opening.

There they all stood waiting.

"Gentlemen," said Old King Brady, "I have fulfilled my contract. I have captured Kid King. As for you, you wretched little runt, show us the way to the Jay-eye-see if you want to live."

The revolver was pressed against the Kid's head as these words were uttered.

He had braced up a bit now, and took it more coolly.

"Bust ahead if you want to get out of this valley," he said. "Just now you have got the big end of the stick. Just you wait. My time will come."

"Lead the way!" said Old King Brady, and remember the bullet is here ready for you if there is any funny business going on."

The Kid staggered forward. It was all he could do to walk.

The passage was by no means a long one.

It appeared to be a natural opening thus far.

Old King Brady's little lantern, which folded up flat and had not been discovered, furnished the light.

In a moment the end of the passage was reached.

Beyond was a low, narrow hole in the rocky wall.

"A drift from the first shaft of the Jay-eye-see?" asked Old King Brady.

"That's what!" growled the Kid.

"Leads into the secret room under the office?"

"That's what."

"Go on, and look out for dead men. You will find them here."

Kid King staggered on.

He could barely walk upright in the drift. The others had to stoop.

Less than thirty feet proved to be the length of the drift.

The Kid stopped at the end, uttering an exclamation of surprise.

The dead twins lay just as Old King Brady had left them.

"Why, it's Mr. Tarbox! There are two of them!" cried Ackerman. "Who killed these men?"

"Come on!" ordered the detective, right behind the Kid, who was ascending the stairs.

They had almost reached the top when a shot rang out, followed by another and another, and another still.

"What's this?" gasped the Kid. "They are having a hot time there. What does it mean?"

"Don't ask me," replied Old King Brady. "Where are your men supposed to be? Answer, or this revolver talks behind your head."

"Working out ore at the Jay-eye-see."

"You have been doing that right along?"

"Yes."

"That is why you tried to keep the mine from being worked."

"Yes."

"That firing is still going on. What do you think it means?"

"I think they are being attacked by some gang."

"Sheriff's posse?"

"Not on your life."

"Who, then?"

"There's your partner, Brady. But my head is so full of the dope I can't think."

"Open the trap. Go up into the office. Anyhow, the firing must be in the yard."

"No, no! Let's go back!" cried Ackerman. "If there is any firing going on we had better wait in that room below."

There was no chance for further argument, for at this same instant the trampling of feet was heard overhead, and the trap door was suddenly thrown up.

There stood the man Bull Buffett, a revolver clutched in his hand and the blood running down his face.

"Save me, Bull! Save me!" cried the Kid, bounding up the stairs.

He rushed to his death.

Quick as a flash Bull Buffett threw up the revolver and fired.

The Kid fell dead at his feet.

"I've done it! I swore I would!" gasped Buffett.

Old King Brady had him covered. He would have fired, but at the same instant Bull Buffett reeled and fell across the man he had slain.

"Hooray, Governor! We've got 'em all!" cried a voice in the doorway.

In rushed Harry, followed by Alice Ackerman, and others pressed close behind.

"Well!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "This game appears to have been played to a finish, for a dead terror is no terror, and Kid King is no more!"

* * * * *

Young King Brady and his miners had made a clean sweep.

Kid King's men were at work in new No. 1 when Harry and Captain Woods suddenly descended upon the Jay-eye-see.

Half a dozen men were around the yard, and as many more down the shaft.

Bull Buffett put up a bold fight, and three of the miners were wounded and two outlaws killed in the skirmish.

Who shot Bull was never known, but it was certain he

had received his death wound when he staggered into the office and tried to escape by the trap door.

His last act in life was to kill Kid King.

As for the others, Captain Woods' men now held them prisoners, some in the shaft and some on the ground.

Old King Brady took the money from the desk, produced his millionaires and proceeded to explain.

The result was a quick raid on the Kid's camp by way of the tunnel.

It was no trouble to capture those remaining there.

Later it was learned that the biggest part of the gang were away on a cattle raid.

They must have got wind of the state of affairs somehow, for they never returned to the Bendigo mountains.

What became of them was never known.

Thus, after all the Bradys won.

They had accomplished what they set out to do, and that was to put Kid King and his crooked company out of business for all time.

The game having been won, all hands excepting Captain Woods and ten men immediately returned to Flagstaff, the Bradys guarding the prisoners.

Here the crooked sheriff had to get a move on, and the prisoners were jailed.

Little was said by the detectives to the directors of the Jay-eye-see during the journey, and once the prisoners were safely disposed of the Bradys, without even returning to the hotel, started east.

Upon their arrival in New York they found a telegram from Mr. Ackerman asking for his bill.

Old King Brady made it out at \$2,000, which included expenses. A week later he received a check for the money, without even a word of thanks, and thus the incident was closed.

The captured outlaws were tried and convicted, and are now serving various terms in the Arizona penitentiary.

The women and the Mexican boys were set free.

Once again Arizona found herself indebted to New York for help to rid the territory of its badmen.

To-day the Jay-eye-see mine is running full force, and to great profit.

This could never have been but for the work of the Bradys in the case of Kid King.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS' CHICAGO CLEW; or, EXPOSING THE BOARD OF TRADE CROOKS," which will be the next number (281) of "Secret Service."

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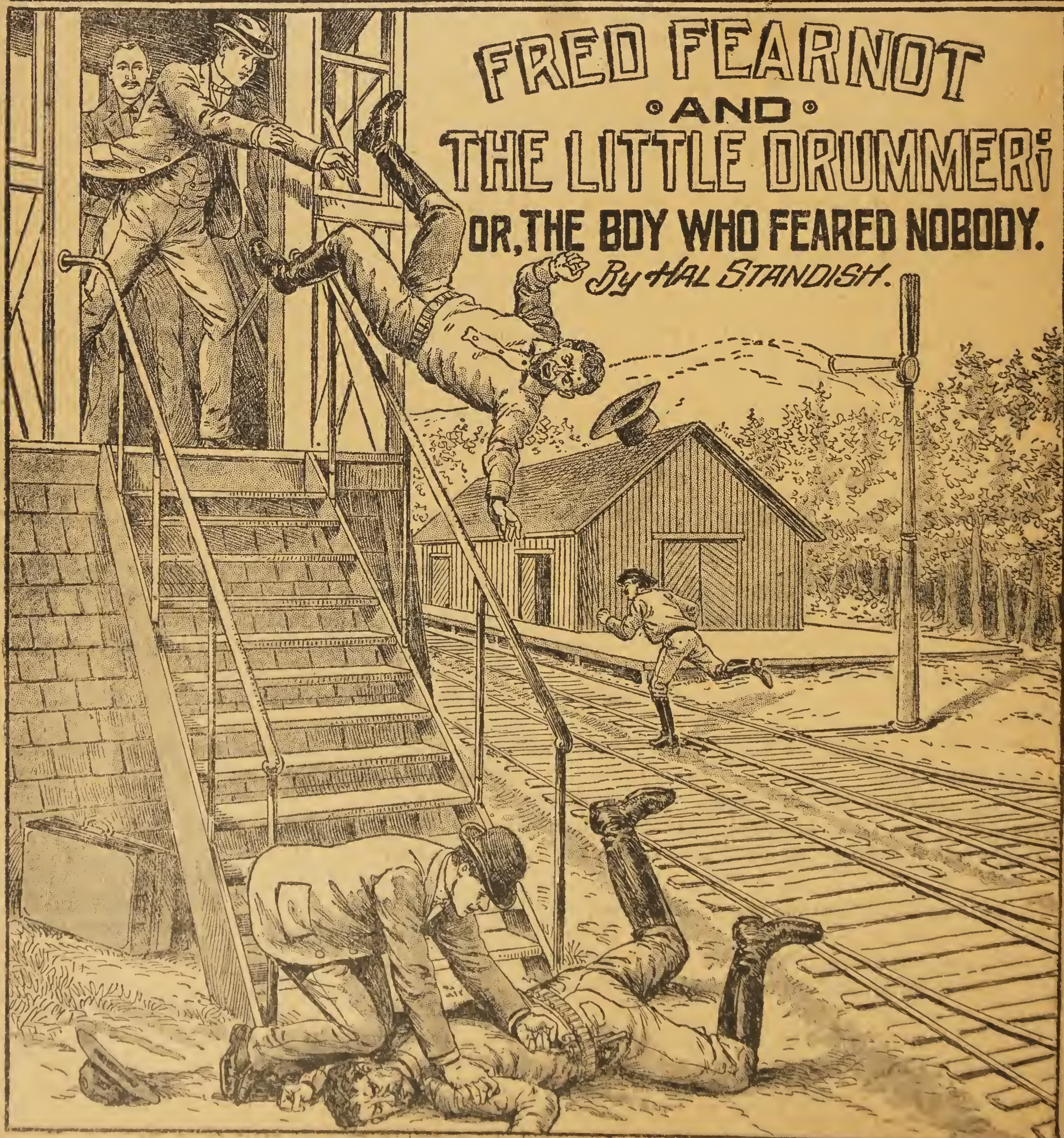
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